



THE
GREAT
COURSES®

Topic
History

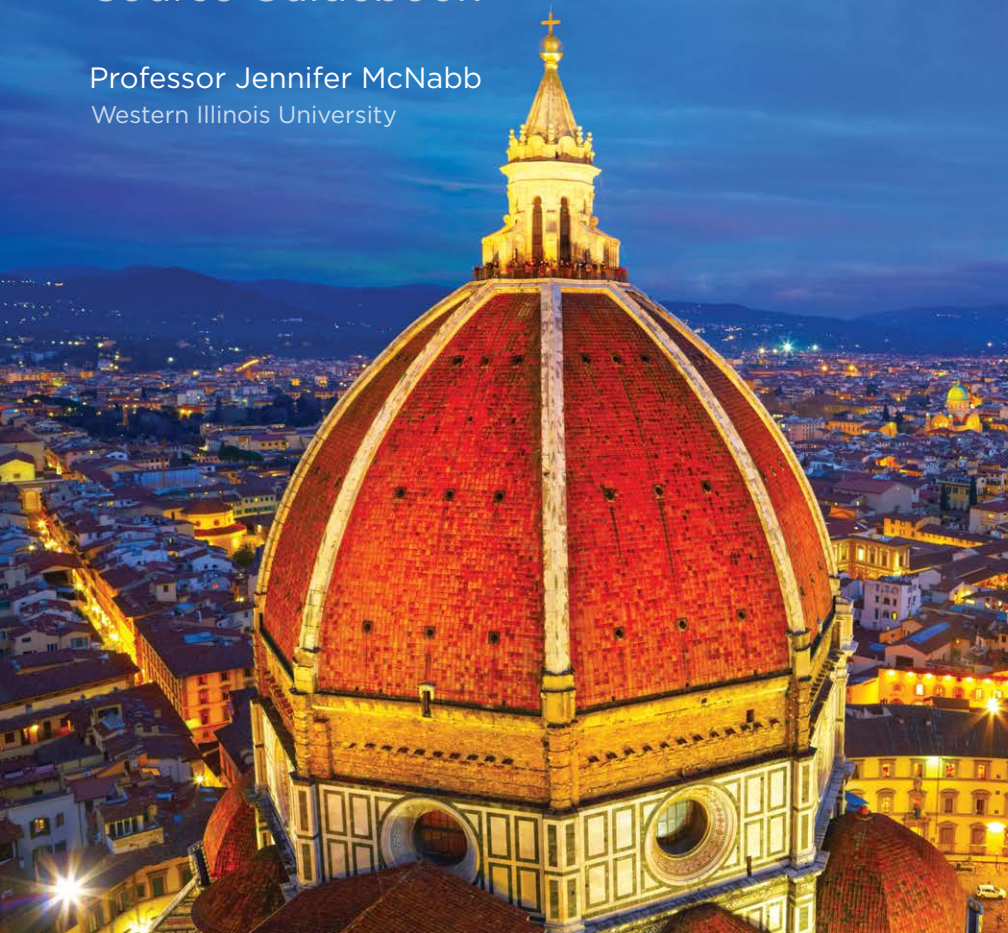
Subtopic
Modern History

Renaissance

The Transformation of the West

Course Guidebook

Professor Jennifer McNabb
Western Illinois University



Published by

THE GREAT COURSES

Corporate Headquarters

4840 Westfields Boulevard | Suite 500 | Chantilly, Virginia | 20151-2299

[PHONE] 1.800.832.2412 | [FAX] 703.378.3819 | [WEB] www.thegreatcourses.com

Copyright © The Teaching Company, 2018

Printed in the United States of America

This book is in copyright. All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written permission of The Teaching Company.



Jennifer McNabb, PhD

Professor of History
Western Illinois University

Jennifer McNabb is a Professor of History and the chair of the Department of History at Western Illinois University. She received her PhD in History from the University of Colorado Boulder in 2003. Since joining Western Illinois University in 2005, Professor McNabb has received the Provost's Award for Excellence in Teaching and the College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Faculty Award for Teaching and for Service. She also served as the associate director of the university's Centennial Honors College.

Professor McNabb has spoken and published widely on social relationships in early modern Europe, especially courtship and marriage. In addition to articles in journals such as the *Journal of Women's History* and *Quidditas*, she has authored material for several textbooks on Western civilization and European history. Professor McNabb has served as president of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association and is the former chair of the program committee of the Midwest Conference on British Studies. In 2018, she was appointed as the chief reader for the Advanced Placement European History Development Committee. 🌐

Table of Contents

Introduction

Professor Biography	i
Course Scope	1

Guides

1	The Spirit of Renaissance	3
2	Rebirth: Classical Values Made New	7
3	The Medieval Roots of Italian Renaissance.	16
4	The Rise of the Humanists.	26
5	Renaissance Florence: Age of Gold	34
6	Renaissance Venice: Most Serene Republic.	42
7	Renaissance Rome and the Papal States	50
8	Renaissance Italy's Princes and Rivals.	60
9	Renaissance Man as Political Animal	67
10	Women and the Italian Renaissance Court.	74
11	Painting in the Early Italian Renaissance	81
12	Painting in the High Italian Renaissance	88
13	Italian Sculpture, Architecture, and Music	94
14	Letters in the Italian Renaissance	100
15	Renaissance Statecraft: A New Path.	106
16	European Renaissance Monarchies	114
17	The Birth of the Christian Renaissance	122
18	Northern Renaissance Art and Music.	129
19	Northern Renaissance Literature and Drama	135

20	Did Women Have a Renaissance?	141
21	Renaissance Life: The Rural Experience	149
22	Renaissance Life: The Urban Experience	157
23	Renaissance Life: Crime, Deviance, and Honor	165
24	Renaissance Life: Marriage	172
25	Renaissance Life: Home and Hearth	181
26	Renaissance Faith: Medieval Contexts	188
27	Renaissance Faith: The Papacy	195
28	Renaissance Faith: Religious Uniformity	202
29	Luther: Breaking the Christian Consensus	209
30	Radical Reform in Renaissance Europe	216
31	Renaissance and Reformation: Connections	224
32	English Reformation	233
33	Catholic Reformations: The Road to Trent	241
34	Catholic Reformations: Spiritual Revival	248
35	Reformation Culture: Continuity and Change	255
36	Renaissance War and Peace: Diplomacy	260
37	The French Wars of Religion	265
38	The Dutch Revolt	273
39	The Spanish Armada	281
40	The Thirty Years' War	291
41	Renaissance at Arms: The Military Revolution	298
42	Renaissance and the Birth of Modern Science	306
43	Renaissance and Magic: Witchcraft	312
44	Renaissance Encounters with Islam	318
45	Renaissance and Exploration: Motives	324
46	Renaissance and Exploration: New Horizons	329
47	Early Modern Power: The New Global Rivalries	335
48	Renaissance Legacy: Burckhardt and Beyond	341

Supplementary Material

Bibliography347

Image Credits369

Renaissance

The Transformation of the West

The Renaissance is perhaps the most famous period in history. Not since the days of antiquity had such a collection of geniuses and powerful personalities seemingly been assembled in one place and time.

If it's accurate to say that Europe's Middle Ages was one of the many casualties of the devastating 14th-century catastrophe known as the Black Death, the Renaissance represented a stunning rebirth that would do more than bring Europe back to life. While life in the shadow of the plague represented life at its most uncertain and chaotic, the Renaissance, in contrast, celebrated the experience of being human and the pursuit of the good life. The fusion of the quest for the good life with new visions of faith and governance propelled the West toward modernity.

As a consequence, much has been written about the Renaissance and its role in the development of the Western tradition. Some of the most memorable accounts were authored by contemporaries who described theirs as a new golden age, bequeathing to posterity a period populated with extraordinary figures whose vision changed the world.

To some extent, that popular perception of the Renaissance is a myth. This course will seek to uncover a fuller Renaissance, marked as much by continuities as change. The Renaissance wasn't the glittering playground of the famous and the powerful; it was actually much more. In this course, we'll see that the ways Renaissance people came to understand their world left a legacy that continues to inform the way we understand our own times.

This course will define Renaissance expansively, in terms of both topics and chronology. It will cover the famous educational, literary, political, and artistic achievements of the Italian states as well as their neighbors and rivals north of the Alps. It will also take up explorations of the Reformation, exploration, scientific and military revolution, and daily

life. Our Renaissance journey will stretch across three of the most dynamic centuries in Western history, from the arrival of the Black Death in 1347 to the close of the Thirty Years' War in 1648.

In surveying these transformative centuries, we will take as our guiding focus the same questions that absorbed Renaissance energies. We will ask, as they did, what the value of education was, what defined a good government, what justified war and the application of violence, what determined the worth and opportunities of individuals, what shaped personal and collective identities, and what it meant to be a person of faith.

Along the way, we will encounter writers and artists whose work made them celebrities in their day and our own. We will meet the popes and princes who served as their patrons, nursing their own ambitions to power and fame. The less famous and familiar, too, will receive our attention, as we seek to get a feel for what it was like for an ordinary person living in extraordinary times.

After our introductions, we begin our investigations on the Italian Peninsula, identifying the particular preconditions that fostered a passion for the ancient world and funded a burst of artistic creativity and achievement that still impresses. We then turn north to the states that created a Christian Renaissance, where the political focus of the Italian humanists was replaced with a passion for Christian antiquity and a more perfect faith.

After a consideration of daily life for men and women during these European Renaissances, we turn to the Reformation. The Renaissance didn't cause the Reformation, but the same questions that animated the Renaissance shaped the work of and responses to religious reform. New theories and practices about the arts of war and diplomacy both reflected and informed the rivalries endemic in these centuries. This time witnessed Europe's reaching for new horizons, both real and figurative.

In the process, we will see Europe transformed, no longer medieval and not yet truly modern, but having established a vision and value for the experience of being human that serves as a foundation for our world. ☺

LECTURE 1

The Spirit of Renaissance

he picture of the Renaissance as a reaction to the preceding centuries of darkness and a return to the light of civilization is a construct, and modern learners are its most recent audience. It's a spectacular tale. It's a story of great people and their deeds—in the halls of government, on the battlefield, in the courts, and in the universities, both near and far from home. Like all the best stories, it has its fair share of truth: The Renaissance was an age of oils, bronze, ink, and paper that represented dazzling human achievement.

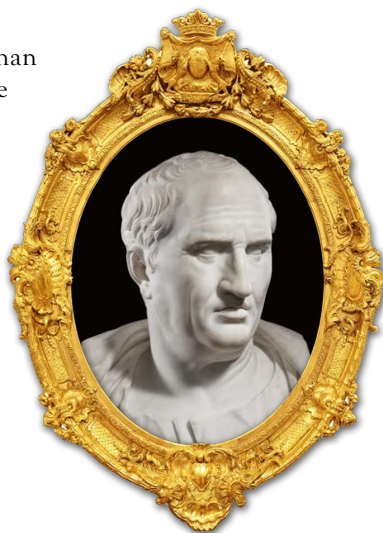
A Complicated Picture

- Every way in which the Renaissance seems to represent the coming of modern sensibilities, there many ways in which the Renaissance represents continuity with the preceding centuries. One of this course's goals is to help people be discerning customers of the Renaissance "brand."
- Not everyone was enamored of the Renaissance world, after all. The critical eye some turned on the laws, institutions, and traditions of their own day can assist modern learners in gaining perspective on the Renaissance. The methodologies of the rebirth itself—asking questions, challenging authorities, and understanding the human condition—actually prepared dissenting voices to launch their salvos at the Renaissance.
- The Renaissance left excluded many from its vaunted celebration of humanity. However, the celebration it did create was truly remarkable. The Renaissance bequeathed a novel spin on a very old idea: Humans were capable of living a good life, and the pursuit of that good life was a truly noble endeavor.

A Shift in Thinking

- During the Middle Ages, humanity hardly celebrated itself. Christian theologians focused on sin—the fallen state of humankind. God's mercy saved creatures whose innate wretchedness should have damned them. There was nothing inspiring in the experience of being human in such a figuration.
- In the 14th century, with the birth of the Renaissance, there were stirrings of an alternate way of thinking about humans: not as ruined, but as worthy. This doesn't mean that the Renaissance represented a rejection of religion. However, this shift in thinking about the human experience allowed for a different kind of redemption of humanity—one focused on the here and now, rather than the hereafter.

- This idea was embedded in the West's own cultural and intellectual heritage, which had been lost or displaced when Roman authority succumbed to its long twilight. Humanism wasn't new. It was a product of the Greco-Roman tradition that Renaissance intellectuals such as Petrarch began to take a keen interest in as they sought to find meaning during times of crisis.
- In the process, they posed a series of questions about what it means to live a good life that are as relevant for people today as they were 600 years ago. Their questions included queries such as: What is the value of education? What determines a person's worth? What justifies war, violence, and revolution? What role should faith play in the human experience?
- Renaissance thinkers believed that turning to the ancients could help answer these questions and others. That meant first tracking down the ancients, in their own words, on their own terms. It was a massive project of recovery that Renaissance figures embraced with the devoted zeal of the true convert.
- The Renaissance was about more than just imitating the ancients. These practitioners of the Renaissance didn't want merely to read and study the ancients; they wanted to be in conversation with them. That was sometimes literal, as when Petrarch wrote letters to his ancient hero, the Roman statesman Cicero. More often, though, this communication took the form of studying the lessons and legacies of the ancients, and then asking: What would the ancients do?



🌀 Cicero (106 BCE–43 BCE) 🌀

- Renaissance thinkers believed that the ancients could serve as moral, political, and intellectual exemplars, providing a path for them in the troubled times in which they lived. However, the Renaissance had something that the ancients didn't: Christianity. That meant the Renaissance involved both ancient learning and the authority of true faith. Christianity could provide answers to the human experience that not even the pagan ancients had been able to identify in their quest for knowledge.
- This fusion of the classical and medieval worldviews meant that the Renaissance man was endowed with a capability for achievement that made him the very apex of creation. Man wasn't a failure; he was the masterpiece. This was an astounding declaration.

Suggested Reading

Brotton, *The Renaissance*.

Wolfson, ed., *Renaissance Historiography*.

Zophy, *A Short History of Renaissance and Reformation Europe*.

LECTURE 2

Rebirth: Classical Values Made New

his lecture continues the course's introduction to the European Renaissance by considering the period's key contexts and values, which set the stage of a new era of questioning and a new set of answers. The 14th-century pandemic disease known as the Black Death swept away somewhere between one-third and one-half of the European population as well as many of the attitudes and practices synonymous with the Middle Ages, making plague the crucible in which Europe's rebirth was forged.

The Plague

- It's an exaggeration to say that any one event or process caused the end of Europe's Middle Ages. Still, there are reasons for identifying the Black Death as a pivotal agent in changing the ways Europeans experienced and understood their world.
- Certainly those living—and dying—during the great mortality of 1347 to 1351 appeared to be aware of the fact they were caught up in extraordinary times. For example, chronicler Agnolo di Tura, who lived and worked in Siena, wrote with a combination of weariness and despair about the depopulation of his city and the disintegration of its moral fabric. He bleakly recounted burying his five sons with his own hands.
- Those who lived through the firestorm of plague were capable of recognizing that the medieval status quo was among the casualties of the disease. Feudalism and manorialism withered in the face of the plague. The population loss struck a fatal blow to the old political-military order and socioeconomic hierarchy.



- In various European territories, elites sought to use law to maintain their traditional advantages. England's Statute of Laborers, for example, set wages at pre-plague levels and decreed that men and women work under conditions clearly out of step with realities in a world where labor was in short supply.
- The value of labor soared following the plague. There simply weren't enough people alive to perform necessary tasks. As a result, workers sought better conditions and economic liberties. In this way, the plague helped initiate the end of serfdom—the untidy set of personal obligations and restrictions of movement on which the socioeconomic hierarchy of the Middle Ages rested.
- The plague also eroded the power of the religious establishment. Many members of the clergy died in attempts to alleviate the suffering of others. Plus, the communal living conditions of the monasteries fueled the spread of the disease and caused horrendous losses there. The numbers of the dying overwhelmed the depleted ranks of the parish priests.
- In a move unthinkable without the context of the disease, laypeople were authorized to hear confessions and supervise last rites. This was a shocking concession of power for an institution that had spent the better part of the previous 1,000 years accumulating a monopoly over salvation.

Impact of the Plague

- The plague wasn't done with Europe in 1351. It kept coming back—once a decade through the end of the century, and then once a generation after that. The elevated mortality rate caused by plague coupled with a lower fertility rate in the decades following the Black Death kept the population from recovering.
- Survivors waited longer to get married and start families, wishing to explore new economic opportunities. Women had less impetus to rush into marriage, given their expanded role in the post-plague workforce.

- More broadly, the plague revealed to medieval people the stark and transitory nature of mortal life. The catastrophe initiated an artistic and literary focus on death and suffering for some, while for others, it prompted a reconsideration of what constituted a good life. That question was at the very heart of what became known as the Renaissance.

Petrarch

- An important figure of the European Renaissance in the context of the Black Death was the Italian scholar Petrarch (full name: Francesco Petrarca). He was born in 1304 in the town of Arezzo on the Italian Peninsula. His father's political activities in nearby Florence had ended with the family's expulsion. As a result, Petrarch's childhood and youth were spent in exile, first in northern Italy and then in Carpentras. The latter was near the city of Avignon, the home of the papal court, which was itself in exile from Rome.
- There, young Petrarch embarked on his education. He and his brother studied Latin and then the law until their father's death in 1326. Rather than embrace the law as his profession, Petrarch instead took lower clerical orders, becoming household chaplain for Cardinal Giovanni Colonna in Avignon.
- During his 17 years with Colonna, Petrarch developed close relationships with the cardinal and his brother Giacomo that continued even after he left their service. Those connections in some ways became a blueprint for Petrarch; he came to rely on the cultivation of similar bonds with patrons and friends throughout his life.



❧ Petrarch (1304–1374) ❧

- It was also during his years in the Colonna household that Petrarch first caught a glimpse of Laura, the great love of his life. Many of the poems that gained Petrarch fame and resulted in his designation as poet laureate in 1341 were written in her honor. Laura, though, was married and never returned his affections. She eventually succumbed to the plague, and Petrarch was left to make sense of his profound loss.
- Petrarch collected his feelings of grief, his fears of death, and his meditations on his own life into a book of songs and verses, the *Canzoniere*. In the process, he was creating his own literary mausoleum through which to achieve immortality. The idea that literature could articulate identity and create an everlasting legacy for its author was a product of Petrarch's deep appreciation for sentiments expressed by the literature of antiquity.

Petrarch's Passion

- Some of his passion for the past was the result of Petrarch's personal history as an émigré. He developed his deep attachment to his homeland and its cultural heritage as an outsider, someone for whom Italy was as much an idea of grandeur and glory as it was a real home. The experience of being a stranger in his own land gave Petrarch an appreciation for Italy that fueled his intellectual and political activities.
- Petrarch's travels required him to develop a strategy to keep in touch with friends and potential patrons. That's how he became a pen pal to the some of the richest, brightest, and most notable of his contemporaries, gaining considerable celebrity in the process. He became a powerful proselytizer of antiquity.
- Petrarch's letters, like those of the ancient Roman statesman Cicero he admired so much, became a powerful vehicle for self-expression. His passion inspired others to explore the past for clues as to how to live admirably in the present.
- Petrarch also collected his letters—350 or so of them—into a collection known as the *Letters on Familiar Matters*. These circulated during Petrarch's own lifetime. Petrarch's extensive correspondence is credited

with helping transform a rather diffuse interest in antiquity into an identifiable movement. For example, Petrarch's unbridled enthusiasm for manuscripts helped launch a vibrant book trade, fueled by the desire to locate and to collect texts, particularly older ones.

- The yearning for ancient manuscripts was also joined by a more critical consideration of their contents. A new spirit and practice of textual criticism arose, one which sought to engage with the ancients and to recapture their words and spirit, unspoiled by the errors or losses caused by medieval neglect.
- In the Renaissance scheme, classical antiquity represented an age of unparalleled human achievement in politics and poetry, in oratory, and in the arts. Those glories were then eclipsed by a cultural and political death, represented by the coming of the barbarians and the initiation of the Dark Ages. Those living during the Renaissance self-consciously and self-confidently described their own period as one of recovery. Their work would see the bright flame of classical civilization reignited.

The Renaissance Spreads

- The Renaissance eventually became a pan-European process. It's too simplistic to say that the Italians exported the Renaissance. However, an Italian connection was vital to the spread of the Renaissance beyond Italian borders.
- Italians living in other European cities as bankers or merchants acquired the same passion for books and art as their countrymen to the south. Giovanni Arnolfini's commission of Jan van Eyck to paint the portrait of him and his bride in 1434 is one particularly famous example.
- Trade also supplied other lands with a material connection to Italian books and art, supporting a bustling market for Italian objects by those who gained an enthusiasm for them. The Italian humanists themselves were also physically mobile, moving between the courts of Europe in search of work or in the course of duty. Petrarch, for example, traveled to foreign lands on diplomatic missions, including one to the court of French King John the Good on behalf of the rulers of Milan in 1360.



— — —
Jan van Eyck's
The Marriage of Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami
— — —

- Northerners themselves travel south to experience the Italian Renaissance firsthand. Among these travelers were the famous artists Hans Holbein and Albrecht Dürer, who, like other northerners, considered Italy a workshop in which to learn and to refine their skills.
- The revival of classical texts that started in Italy also played a crucial role in the westward expansion into the New World. For example, among the texts that influenced Christopher Columbus's strategy was the ancient astronomer Ptolemy's work *Geography*, a book first translated in Renaissance Florence.
- Building libraries stocked with classical transcriptions became the rage in states as far distant from Italy as England. There, Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, stocked his library and commissioned translations from the likes of the famous longtime chancellor of Florence and humanist, Leonardo Bruni. Duke Humphrey's collection lives on to this day as the result of his bequeathing his acquisitions to Oxford University.

Humanists

- Some of Duke Humphrey's countrymen wished to expand their ability to learn directly from the ancients, sparking an interest in Greek and other languages. Perhaps the most famous of these students was the English humanist Sir Thomas More.
- In the north, the attention to texts and to the classical models they provided found particular focus in social critique, especially as touching the institutional church. The leading northern humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, fused his enthusiasm for literary critique with a blistering attack on the myriad abuses of the church in his day.
- The critique he issued was, in some ways, a logical outgrowth of the questioning of the church's personnel, methods, and materialism that had surfaced with special virulence during the plague and its aftermath. Those conditions had established a certain framework for railing against authorities that were seen abusing or misusing their power.

- The quest to recover the classical biblical tradition fueled this northern rebirth, creating a Christian Renaissance. Christian humanists examined the earliest extant copies of the gospels and epistles and subjected medieval translations and transcriptions to rigorous scrutiny.
- In the process, they uncovered deep divergences of their contemporary Christian communities and leadership from their apostolic roots. That spirit of questioning would, during the early 16th century, merge into a series of broad protests against the papal church collectively known as the Reformation.

Suggested Reading

Petrarch, *The Secret with Related Documents*.
Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Who was Petrarch, and how did his enthusiasm for antiquity help shape the Renaissance?
- 2 Which classical values and practices did Petrarch and his Italian contemporaries most admire, and why?
- 3 What impact did the Black Death have on medieval society?

LECTURE 3

The Medieval Roots of Italian Renaissance



his lecture focuses on one of the key questions of the European Renaissance: Why did it begin in Italy? The lecture begins by seeking the answer in an unexpected place: the reign of a foreign ruler, King Charles VIII of France (r. 1483–1498). The lecture also looks at paradigm-shifting events like the plague and changing systems of government.

Charles VIII

- Charles VIII inherited the throne at age 13 from his more capable father, Louis XI. Among Louis's many legacies was a revival in France of the cult of the medieval emperor Charlemagne. Charlemagne was king of the Franks from 768–814 and king of the Romans from 800–814.
- Louis drew on popular and mythological accounts of the medieval emperor in propaganda that celebrated and reinforced his own authority, a practice that would serve as a powerful influence over his son. Charles VIII wished fervently to be a new Charlemagne, and, inspired by his famous predecessor, he went to Italy near the end of the 15th century at the head of a French army of 30,000.
- One of Charlemagne's most significant contributions to the development of the medieval world in the West was the revival of the notion of empire on a grand scale—the grandest since the days of the ancient Roman emperors. Charlemagne's heirs, both familial and symbolic, were animated by dreams of Italian lands and authority. That circumstance helps explain why, in 1494, Charles VIII led his army of 30,000 across the Alps, marching through an Italian Peninsula that was then the site of perhaps the fullest flowering of the Italian Renaissance.



☞ Charlemagne (747?–814) ☞

- Charles VIII's misadventure in Italy set off shockwaves, which included a long conflict waged largely on Italian soil between France's ruling house of Valois and the Holy Roman Empire's ruling house of Habsburg.

Crisis and instability provide a useful lens through which to view late medieval and Renaissance Italy and to explore the conditions that created, sustained, and challenged the Italian Renaissance.

Italy

- Just as there was no Spain or Germany in the Middle Ages, there was actually no Italy either, in the modern sense. The name is used as shorthand for an easily identifiable geographic area rather than as an acknowledgement of a politically unified nation-state. A unified Italian state did not exist before, during, or for a long time after the Renaissance.
- This lack of unity was a key point of distinction, separating the many Italian states from other later medieval political units. Unlike the northern monarchies, shaped by feudal imperatives and territorial ambitions, the Italian Peninsula was home in the late Middle Ages to a host of states that practiced a variety of political systems.
- There were kingdoms and principalities in Italy, a notable one being the Kingdom of Naples in the south. Equally notable were the dominions of the popes—the Papal States—ruled by the pontiff from the city of Rome (and occasionally from elsewhere).
- North of the Papal States in central Italy, a variety of circumstances led to the development of different models of governance. Urban life in northern Italy survived the collapse of Roman imperial authority better than anywhere else in western Europe. Those lands avoided the worst of the urban contraction of the West that marked Europe's so-called Dark Ages, and they also benefitted most from the expansion of trading and commercial networks in the 11th and 12th centuries.
- Italy came to be caught up in the long struggle for power between medieval popes and emperors that often saw both serve as absentee landlords or as challengers seeking support. This often meant that Italian territories gained a significant degree of autonomy in return for their allegiance to one or the other, or as a consequence of collective action to resist the authorities of these powerhouse princes, particularly with regard to taxation.



- These political and economic realities helped to create a group of elites not found elsewhere in Europe: a community of citizens, drawn from the successful mercantile interests and the nobility, who, in northern Italy, began making cities rather than country estates their home. These citizens forged a new type of self-government: the commune.
- The elites in these flourishing cities seized political control of their governments. By the early 12th century, the roster of communes included Lucca, Milan, Parma, Rome, Pavia, Pistoia, Verona, Bologna, Siena, Florence, Pisa, Genoa, and Venice. These communes linked together both an urban center and a surrounding hinterland. Politically, they exhibited values that emphasized the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of good governance for men whose occupations or hereditary traditions garnered them the status of citizen.
- The notion of citizenship, cherished by the ancients, was little in evidence in the feudal monarchies of the north. There, the model of rulers and the ruled reigned supreme instead. By reestablishing the notion of citizenship, the Italian states preserved an ideal of political liberty that set them apart from other medieval Christians.

Connection with Empire

- A key ingredient in the city-states' legacy of independence comes from the connection of Italian territories with the Holy Roman Empire. This medieval empire in the German-speaking lands was the heir of Charlemagne's 9th-century imperial creation. German emperors, like King Charles VIII of France centuries later, dreamed of Italy. Otto III (r. 996–1002) was crowned emperor in southern Italy, for example, and the young Hohenstaufen Frederick II (r. 1215–1250) ruled as Sicily's king before he was able to secure his patrimony in the empire itself.
- Given the vastly different visions and strategies of the medieval emperors, it's tough to make generalizations about them. However, they tended to agree on one tactic: As a group, the German emperors made a habit of using their connections with Italy as a means of expanding their holdings and authority elsewhere.

- Frequently at war, both in the empire and abroad, they bargained with the economically successful Italian states, seeking wealth in return for granting a greater measure of political autonomy. Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1155–1190), for example, agreed to enhanced self-government for the members of the so-called Lombard League of northern Italy after they resisted his attempts at greater imperial control.
- By virtue of location and the ambition of merchants and investors, the Italian states, more than any other area of the West, benefitted from the contraction of Byzantium, the remnant of the old Eastern Roman Empire. The seizure of Constantinople by crusaders in 1204 was just one cataclysm in a prolonged period of twilight that ended Byzantium's economic hegemony in the Mediterranean and resulted in Italian ascendancy.

Limits of Liberty

- Note that Italian liberty was limited in its application. It's easy to get excited about the political experiments of the Renaissance states and to see in them the origins of what have come to be seen as identifiably modern notions of participation and representation. However, the poor and disenfranchised in the Italian states were, on balance, just as poor and disenfranchised as their counterparts in other areas of Europe.
- The city-states never seriously flirted with the idea of universal democracy. Still, several Italian states had far more expansive political participation than elsewhere in Europe. That's because their governments were not in the hands of monarchs or aristocratic oligarchies but were instead republican in orientation, a product of the commune revolution.

Classicism

- The notion of a period of darkness persists for the period between the decline of the Roman Empire and the coming rebirth of the Renaissance. The culprit was the loss of classical culture, with the glories of Greece and Rome squandered in the hands of barbarians.

- The Italian Peninsula was a site of preservation. It hosted the physical ruins of the mighty Roman civilization that wrote its achievements in architecture and carved its successes in stone. For example, the Pantheon stood as a beacon to a lost world of grace and dignity, despite the untidy legacy of its pagan past.
- Note that imperial Rome did have a living legacy during the Middle Ages in the form of the Byzantine Empire. That frequently sparked tension between eastern and western contenders for Rome's imperial mantle. However, after the Byzantine emperor Justinian's short-lived successes in putting the empire back together in the 6th century, the Byzantine Empire increasingly became a Greek, rather than a Latin, empire. That left the Latin heritage to Italy.
- Byzantium's troubles during the Middle Ages prompted the flight of men of learning and culture from the east to the west, particularly during the Byzantine Renaissance of the 12th and 13th centuries. These Byzantine scholars brought with them great quantities of classical learning.

Plague in Italy

- Italy was subject to contemporary realities when the plague made Messina its port of call in 1347. The plague was a game-changer for Italy in many ways, but its exact role in the origins of the Renaissance is the subject of intense contestation.
- Some scholars have argued that the Renaissance was born of economic contraction following the devastations of the plague in Italy. There, the conditions of urban living helped the plague claim 50 percent of the population, and competition in a declining economy served as fuel for the Renaissance.
- However, one of the key ingredients of the Renaissance recipe is the availability of capital to support political, intellectual, and artistic change. Alternate interpretations—most notably by Richard Goldthwaite and Lisa Jardine—have emphasized the necessity of economic expansion as an underpinning of the Renaissance.

- Regardless, the Italian states were devastated but not cowed by the great pandemic. Their hold over Mediterranean trade even grew, in part because those who survived the plague had improved economic opportunities and more disposable income than ever before.
- The survivors and their heirs acquired a fashion for conspicuous consumption: The plague fostered a more sanguine approach to worldly goods that contributed to an increasingly vibrant consumer economy. Wealth, then, was to be displayed and enjoyed rather than hidden or given away for the health of one's soul.
- As the plague struck down those from all walks of life, it helped loosen the traditional order of society and allowed for significant social mobility. Merchants, craftsmen, and others of new money used conspicuous consumption to demonstrate their improved status.

Political Structures

- Increased social mobility raised the competition for political power and offices, but that actually destabilized the practice of citizenship. Elites began to respond to challenges to their power by increasing their hold on the mechanisms of government. The imposition of oligarchical power limited the practice of republicanism. Across the 15th century, a gradual transition to lordships occurred in most areas.
- Only Florence and Venice evaded the trend. When Florence succumbed to Medici domination, only Venice remained of the major republics. Venetian republicanism was a rather special brand that saw its patricians jealously guard their control.
- The transition from republics to lordships was often coded with concerns for security. Lip service was given to traditional republican institutions even as real power was increasingly concentrated in the hands of individuals. This transition to lordships was aided by the rise of military mercenaries—the *condottieri*—who fought under contract to assist others in seizing power or to take power themselves. A representative of this new lordly ruling class, Ludovico Il Moro (1452–1508) of Milan, invited Charles VIII and the French into Italy in 1494.

Interpretations of Crisis

- The atmosphere of crisis drove educated men to study the classics. They pioneered a new learning, dedicated to an exploration of the human condition. In the writings of the ancient thinkers, the Renaissance intellectuals found edification, advice, and solace.
- Some used the lessons of the past as a call to a spirited defense of republicanism, for example, as in the case of Renaissance Florence. Others used the classics to seek an understanding of the divine—to celebrate and dignify man as the highest of God's creations. All devotees of this learning found in the classics a valued roadmap to navigate their own world—whether that was the world of the palazzo, the university, the market, or the battlefield.
- There were always battles to fight, as Italy negotiated the intense rivalries within. The five powers of Milan, Florence, Venice, the Papal States, and Sicily spent much of this period locked in a protracted race for supremacy. The minor states also threw their own hats into the international ring with regularity. Beyond the Alps, The imperial Hapsburgs and French-ruling house of Valois joined the Turks in the east as threats to everything the Italian states held dear.
- The rebirth of classical civilization would have powerful aesthetic elements, but the desire to know the ancients was born of necessity to deal with crisis. First, the devastations of the plague prompted people to question what it meant to live a good life, and then political crises caused people to wonder what the ancients would do.
- Although King Charles VIII of France died at 28 having failed to recapture the glories of his hero Charlemagne, his coming to the peninsula would result in Italy being a battleground between the Valois and the Habsburg for decades. The fact that he was invited by Milan illuminates both the vibrancy and the self-destructive impulses of the Italian Renaissance states.

- The political realities of the peninsula in the 14th and 15th centuries reveal that the Italian polities struggled with fundamental and timeless questions about how best to order human society under the structure of the state. Like the ancients before them, they debated who possessed the rights to, and capability for, political engagement and political dominance.

Suggested Reading

Jardine, *Worldly Goods*.

Law and Paton, ed., *Communes and Despots in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*.

Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What political and economic contexts shaped the origins of the Italian Renaissance?
- 2 What role did the ancient past play in late medieval Italy?
- 3 In what ways did crisis, both internal and external, help to initiate the Renaissance and to jeopardize Italian political experiments?
- 4 Famous Renaissance historian Jacob Burckhardt described the Italian state as a “work of art.” What do you think that description means, and is it a useful way of thinking about the Italian Renaissance city-states?

LECTURE 4

The Rise of the Humanists

his lecture focuses on one of the most challenging of the foundational concepts of the Renaissance: humanism. The lecture delves into what humanism was and was not during the Renaissance centuries. Under the influence of humanism, education underwent vast changes, and some of the consequences of those changes proved enduring.

What Is Renaissance Humanism?

- Renaissance humanism can be best understood as an educational and cultural program based on the acquisition and demonstration of written and spoken eloquence, a project best achieved through the critical study of ancient texts. It's a consideration of the experience of being human, of how to express and appreciate the full breadth of human engagement and activity.
- Generally speaking, humanism subordinated metaphysical and epistemological questions to considerations of private morality and public good. While humanism has an intense interest in matters of moral philosophy, it shouldn't, in itself, be considered a new or rival philosophy.
- Regarding humanism's origins, the rather unique economic and political conditions of the Italian Peninsula in the later Middle Ages called for a distinct knowledge and skill set. This was a type of training for life that was less in evidence elsewhere in Europe, where education was largely clerical in form and function.

Universities

- The formation of universities in the 12th century drew and expanded upon the relationship between theology and education. University students were required to take clerical orders to qualify for study.
- The medieval course of study involved seven subjects: the three-discipline trivium of grammar, rhetoric, and logic—the language arts—and the four-discipline quadrivium of mathematical studies that included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. There were universities whose more advanced emphases included training beyond theology, specializing in medicine, as at Salerno, or law, as at Padua.
- Universities were much in evidence on the Italian Peninsula in the later Middle Ages. Theology, though, reigned supreme among the advanced university curricula, particularly in the universities north of the Alps.

The type of scholarly inquiry that powered those theology curricula was scholasticism—the application of logic to theology, perhaps best associated with Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274).

- The initial excitement of the new methodological investigation of faith represented by scholasticism had, by Petrarch's time, come to be seen in some quarters as giving way to sterile debates doomed forever to incompleteness and irrelevance. Petrarch questioned the utility of scholasticism and its reliance on medieval Aristotelian authorities, chiefly on the grounds that it failed to provide much in the way of assistance in achieving a good life.

New Learning

- Petrarch put the focus squarely on an investigation of the classical, rather than medieval, intellectual tradition and championed a new emphasis on ethics. He wasn't the only one to seek examples from the ancients. Many Italians in the urban environment engaged in trade and commerce and worked as secretaries and orators.
- Their work required a proficiency in rhetoric and letter writing that led to their quest for classical models. In ancient Latin texts, they found examples of structure and phrasing that lent elegance to their own work. However, some of them wanted more. Rather than being content with familiar authors and texts, these professional writers and orators sought to discover lost learning.
- These circumstances resulted in a series of new informational and educational markets. First, the increasing skill set of those most capable practitioners in writing and oratory created a type of meritocracy, with the choicest of appointments reserved for the most skilled and studied. This, in turn, further fueled interest in studying and uncovering Latin manuscripts.
- Second, a passion for possessing such artifacts of ancient erudition grew, leading to the emergence of a vibrant market for book collecting. These markets and practices would help inform and shape the vision

of learning articulated by Petrarch and championed by those who popularized his theories about the role of classical scholarship in informing the experience of the good life—the humanists.

Men of Books

- The author Pietro Paolo Vergerio was one of a number of authors who left behind a body of literature outlining the principles and strategies of humanist education. Like others who offered educational treatises, Vergerio espoused a deep love of books.



♪ Pietro Paolo Vergerio (1370–1444) ♪

- For Vergerio and the humanists, the font of learning was to be found in the literature of ancient Rome and ancient Greece. Cicero served as the greatest source of inspiration, owing to his style and civic engagement in ancient Rome. Additionally, the works of Seneca, Virgil, Livy, and Tacitus as well as the Latin church fathers such as Saint Augustine and Saint Jerome were all pored over by the humanists in the quest for Latin elegance.
- The focus on classical texts ignited a desire to find what had been lost. The Latin heritage was robust in its survival, but it was by no means complete. Papal secretary and Florentine chancellor Poggio Bracciolini, for example, went looking for forgotten manuscripts while attending the Council of Constance (1414–1418), famously recovering Quintilian's text on rhetoric at a monastery.
- The humanists recognized that the ancient Romans had themselves been shaped by another great tradition of learning, that of ancient Greece. The recovery of the classical Greek tradition proved more of a challenge for early humanists, as Greek language had been a victim of the triumph of Latin in medieval Christendom.

- A breakthrough moment in the development of Greek studies in the West occurred with the arrival of Manuel Chrysoloras. The Byzantine scholar and statesman visited Florence in 1397 on a diplomatic mission to secure support for Byzantium in its fight against the Ottomans.
- While in residence in Florence, Chrysoloras taught Greek. One of the men he instructed, Guarino Guarini (1370–1460), journeyed to Constantinople, spending five years in the Byzantine capital. Others made the trip to Constantinople as well. They returned to Italy, creating an Italian cadre of Greek scholars and teachers of Greek.



☞ Manuel Chrysoloras (1355–1415) ☞

The Humanist Curriculum

- The lecture now turns to the humanist curriculum itself. When Vergerio identified his subjects of instruction—grammar, rhetoric, history, moral philosophy, and poetry—he was advocating for more than a shift in the topics of educational emphasis. He was actually suggesting a significant reconsideration of the purpose of learning itself.
- By aligning these subjects with “free men,” Vergerio was commenting on their utility for those whose who ruled. Note that he was addressing his text to the son of the lord of Padua. In so doing, Vergerio seems to be advocating an educational ideal reserved for the select few. He deemed humanist learning appropriate for the children of the ruling class—those who would themselves rule one day.

- In reality, though, Vergerio's text speaks of the transformational power of learning that would reach beyond those in power. Education served as preparation for a lifelong appreciation of learning that animated and shaped personal and civic relationships. This was a new educational philosophy about the utility of education.

Specific Schools

- The study of the humanities required a different kind of educational environment than that of the medieval universities or the middle-level schools that offered instruction for those embarking on careers in business or trade. The consequence was a new type of schoolmaster, the pioneer of which was Vittorino da Feltre (1378–1446).
- Vittorino's school in Mantua, the *Casa Giocosa*, was the site of instruction of the children of the ruler of Mantua as well as boys drawn from a variety of backgrounds, elite and non-elite alike. Instruction and activities in this palace school fostered both intellectual and physical development as the product of a close interpersonal relationship between teacher and student. This was a pronounced contrast to the setting that marked medieval classrooms, where corporal punishment was employed liberally.
- Vittorino's teacher, Guarino Guarini, created his own vision for education in the classical tradition, with schools in Florence, Venice, Verona, and finally Ferrara. He went there at the invitation of Marquis Niccolo III d'Este (r. 1383–1441) to tutor his son. Among Guarino's scholarly achievements was the compilation of the first Renaissance Latin grammar, *Regulae grammaticales*.
- In a relatively short space of time, the instructional styles of Guarino and Vittorino came to inform educational values and practices throughout Italy. By 1500, the principles of humanist education dominated Latin schools in Italy.

Consequences

- The acquisition of knowledge and, by extension, virtue—the chief drivers of humanism—had long-reaching consequences for wider discourse about the nature and capabilities of man. The study of ancient texts led the humanists to a reconsideration of man's condition that rejected the medieval focus on the sinful, ruined state of mankind.
- That idea had perhaps most famously been articulated by the 13th-century pope Innocent III in his "On Contempt for the World." In that text, Innocent exposes the grotesqueries of man as a way to encourage a striving for the world to come, rather than the mortal prison of the body.
- Humanists countered such lamentations on man's state. For example, the Florentine Giannozzo Manetti acknowledged the meager origins of man but celebrated man's ability to process his world through his senses and through his reason.
- Another thinker's commentaries on the nature of man and his promise have become the quintessential humanist manifesto. His name is Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494). Pico's inspiration for what has come to be known as "Oration on the Dignity of Man" drew on Christian philosophy, but also incorporated the results of his examination of Arabic philosophy, the Jewish mystical tradition, and a study of the occult.
- On the basis of his consideration of these wide-ranging authorities, Pico's text expressed delight in man's ability, unique among all of the elements of God's creation, to know the creator. This could be achieved through man's development of his mental capacity. For man alone, God reserved the gift of possibility: Man could achieve anything.
- It is worth noting that Pico's stirring words never reached their intended contemporary audience and resulted in his arrest, following their examination by papal authorities. Pico died just a few years after his arrest, still a young man with so much of the limitless promise he celebrated left unfulfilled.

Suggested Reading

Black, *Education and Society in Florentine Tuscany*.
Kallendorf, trans., *Humanist Educational Treatises*.
Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What is humanism, and what values and practices did humanists prize during the Renaissance? How did those values and practices represent a challenge to medieval understandings of mankind and its purpose?
- 2 What subjects and educational approaches did Renaissance humanists recommend, and why?
- 3 In what ways did Renaissance schoolmasters create an educational revolution?
- 4 How did humanism yield new debates about human potential, and what position did humanists take?

LECTURE 5

Renaissance Florence: Age of Gold



his lecture focuses on Florence, a central city of the Renaissance. Its vaunted republican government was vigorously extolled by the writer Leonardo Bruni and others, and towering figures in the fields of the literary and visual arts were residents. Florence was a birthplace of Renaissance energies and ideas during the 14th and 15th centuries. However, liberty and equality were not the universal experience of all who called Renaissance Florence home.

Background on Florence

- Much of what scholars know about Florence and its environs comes from an extraordinary piece of evidence: the *Castato* (tax survey) of 1427. The records generated by the survey give a glimpse into a particular historical moment in Florentine history.
- The tax survey pointed to a marked urban/rural division, in demographic as well as economic terms. The city itself was home to 14 percent of the Florentine state's population, but city dwellers controlled 67 percent of the state's documented wealth.
- Florence's social divisions were clear. At the top was an elite dominated by the nobility and old merchants (the *magnati* and *grandi*) and a group of new merchants, bankers, and others of the professional class (the *popolo grasso*). Next came the artisans and shopkeepers from the lower guilds (the *gente mezzana*). At the bottom were the *popolo minuto*, comprised of wage earners, servants, and non-laborers (the aged, vagrants, and criminals among them).
- The upper 1 percent of the population controlled 25 percent of the wealth. A single family—the Strozzi—possessed 2.6 percent of the taxable wealth of the city, and five other families—the Alberti, Albizzi, Bardi, Medici, and Peruzzi—controlled close to 10 percent of the taxable wealth.

Historical Context

- In the 13th century, a number of circumstances coalesced to put Florence on the trajectory to great wealth and power. Florence supported the papacy in the long urban struggles in Italy between the Guelf and Ghibelline factions. This conflict pitted supporters of the German Holy Roman Emperor against those of the popes.
- Florence backed the pope and was rewarded for its longtime loyalty with certain privileges. Chief among them were serving as a center for papal banking and collecting dues owed the papacy and transferring that enormous wealth to Rome. Trading on their economic advantages,

Florentine elites also gained control the raw materials for the city's wool industry, which, by the early 14th century, employed approximately one-third of the population.

- The new merchant elite who controlled this profitable industry would come to challenge the Tuscan feudal and older urban elites for dominance in the Florentine commune. These *popolo grasso* (which translate to “fat people”) bristled at their exclusion from political access commensurate, as they felt, with their ambition and resources.
- The urban folk of middling status also found their own restricted access to political opportunities unacceptable, even as they fretted about the presence in the city of large numbers of unskilled wool workers, the *ciompi*. They worried that poverty of these laborers could easily spill into armed demonstrations of discontent.

Changes

- As a consequence of this imbalance of political and economic realities, Florence was due for extreme changes. That process began in the 1280s, when rich merchants were deemed, by papal intervention, eligible to participate the government via representatives known as priors selected by the greater merchant guilds. There were seven of these: three cloth guilds, plus the furriers, the silk merchants, the physicians and apothecaries, and the bankers and money-changers.
- The newly enfranchised merchants staged a coup in 1283 that made the priors the executive power of the state. They left other institutional structures of the government, such as the two councils, and personnel, such as the *podestà* (the state's chief military commander), unchanged.
- During the next decade, the policies of this new merchant-elite government sparked aristocratic outrage, particularly the decree to liberate the commune's serfs. That move was interpreted as a direct affront to the landed elites, who stepped up their expressions of dismay in the form of public violence.



- To stem the rising tide of disorder, a codification of the political revolution was required. It came in 1293 in the form of the Ordinances of Justice. The legislation's legacy was far-reaching, as it finalized the form of Florentine government for the next two centuries.
- The reform recognized participatory rights for 14 additional guilds and expanded the number of priors to 8. One of them, aided by 1,000 soldiers, would be designated the standard bearer of justice, responsible for ensuring peace and stability. The magnates were further required to swear an oath of allegiance to the new government and prohibited from serving as prior.
- These were sweeping changes that effectively disenfranchised the traditional elites. They resisted, sometimes with considerable vigor. In the early years of the 14th century, for example, two competing Guelf factions played out a devastating civil war. This conflict resulted in Petrarch's father's exile from Florence.
- The victory of the more conservative Guelf faction subsequently saw their leadership plunge Florence into economically ruinous wars and problematic taxation policies that threatened to destabilize the prosperity of the city-state. This government even invited foreign princes to rule during times of particular crisis during the 1320s and 1340s.

Disasters

- The imported foreign leaders didn't stay, but bigger changes were on the way for Florence, coming by virtue of disasters both manmade and natural. The manmade disaster came courtesy of the renunciation by Edward III of England of his debts to the Bardi and Peruzzi banking houses in 1343. That threw the city-state into financial disorder and set off a chain reaction of failure for the conservative elites in Florence.
- The subsequent political reforms sought to stabilize the state's finances. They created a single public debt, support for which offered annuities. The system meant that bondholders were literally invested in the fiscal well-being of the state.

- These reforms also opened the office of prior, by this point 9 in number, to all guildsmen. It required that 6 come from the 14 lesser or craft guilds. A final constitutional adjustment sought to limit the influence of individual families, prohibiting multiple members of the same family from holding important communal office concurrently.
- The natural disaster was the Black Death. By some estimates, the loss of population in Florence was 70 percent. Survivors enjoyed greater access to commercial and political opportunities than before and believed additional benefits would follow.
- The revolt in 1378 of Florence's wool workers, the *ciompi*, was an effect of this tide of rising expectations for the lower orders. However, their gains were short-lived. The innovations were suppressed and followed by the resurrection of the closed aristocratic government that had preceded them.

Outside Challenges

- Next, Florence faced challenges from external forces. One challenge from the outside came in the form of war with the duchy of Milan. In a conflict that played out between 1385 and 1402, Florentine resources and resolve were stretched to the breaking point. It also bequeathed the republic with some of its most eloquent defenders, including Leonardo Bruni.
- Milanese leader Gian Galeazzo Visconti's death in 1402 brought an end to the immediate Milanese threat. A jubilant Florence then successfully won its own quest for expansion, soon capturing Pisa and coming to dominate most of the rest of Tuscany.
- During these years of trial, Florence benefitted from the achievements of some of its most talented statesmen-humanists. In addition to Bruni, who served as chancellor of the republic in 1410-1411 and again from 1427-1444, other civic leaders were Poggio Bracciolini and Coluccio Salutati. They were instrumental in cementing the key link between humanism and state service that gave particular definition to the Florentine Renaissance.

- These statesmen-scholars weren't intent just on studying the ancients. Instead, they sought the internalizing of classical values and their application in solving contemporary problems. Additionally, the medieval emphasis on apostolic poverty was gently pushed aside by scholarship that justified the acquisition of prosperity and considered it to be a vehicle for virtue.

The Medici

- A new family came to dominate the affairs of the republic: the Medici. As the conservative tendencies that set in after the revolt of the *ciompi* in 1378 solidified, resistance formed in opposition. The champion of the anti-oligarchy forces was Cosimo de' Medici.
- The Medici in the early part of the 15th century were not part of the establishment. They were new to wealth and not supporters of the firmly entrenched Albizzi family. The Albizzi-Medici enmity played out in public when, in 1433, Cosimo was exiled at the instigation of the ruling oligarchy.
- The tables turned the next year, when a triumphant Cosimo returned to the city, riding the crest of a wave of support. The Albizzi oligarchs found themselves on the outs. In the wake came six decades of Medici domination of the republic.
- Cosimo took up the mantle of first citizen, massaging the intent of the republican constitution to see his own will done. Offices were not outright demanded for Medici supporters, but the committee that made official appointments owed its allegiance to Cosimo.
- Despite alterations to the functioning of the Florentine republic Cosimo's achievement of first-citizen status represented, he was much lamented at his death in 1464. His far less capable son Piero assumed power. His imperious nature set people's teeth on edge and may have brought the Medici moment crashing to an abrupt halt had not Piero himself been halted by death.

- Next up, the young man waiting in the wings was Lorenzo de' Medici (r. 1469–1492). Among his achievements were supporting the young artist Michelangelo and surviving the papal-engineered Pazzi Plot of 1478. He saved Florence in the war that followed by slipping away to Naples to flip the leader of the pope's army to his own side.
- Lorenzo was less oblique in his exercise of authority than his grandfather had been. He created a new body—the Council of Seventy—in 1480, exhibiting the suspicion of insurgence that would become increasingly pronounced in his later life. The body was a group hand-selected by Lorenzo and then, afterward, self-selecting. Its power at the heart of the Florentine state continued to Lorenzo's death in 1492.

Suggested Reading

Crum and Paoletti, eds., *Renaissance Florence*.
 Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and Their Families*.
 Howard, *Creating Magnificence in Renaissance Florence*.
 Najemy, *A History of Florence*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What circumstances helped make Florence so vibrant a center of political and intellectual activity that it is often heralded as the center of the Italian Renaissance?
- 2 How did Florence's rivalry with Milan influence republican politics and humanism?
- 3 What justifications did intellectuals and statesmen offer in defense of political activity and wealth? How did they define the good life in Renaissance Florence?

LECTURE 6

Renaissance Venice: Most Serene Republic



his lecture dives into the complex history and legacy of Venice during the period of the Renaissance. It surveys the rise of Venice and also looks at aspects that complicate the designation Venice has long enjoyed as a homogenous state of peace, prosperity, and good order.

Shaping Venice

- Like Florence, Venice was shaped by the fortunes of its merchant elite. Florence had its wool trade as the backbone of its economic might and civic identity. In Venice, it was the business of shipbuilding—centered around the work of the state shipyards—that powered Venetian prosperity.
- The crusading years had been good ones for Venice. The crafty doge (“duke”) Enrico Dandolo (r. 1192–1205) presided over Venetian interests in the famously disastrous Fourth Crusade. For Venice, the failure of the Latin crusaders to pay the promised fee for passage to the Holy Land allowed Dandolo to divert the impoverished crusaders first to Christian Zara, a city with which Venice was at war, and then on to Constantinople, reached by the soldiers of Christ in 1204.
- In the great Byzantine capital, the crusaders pillaged and plundered, deposing the native emperor and putting one of their own number in his place. They never actually made it to the Holy Land, despite papal exhortations to stop beating up their fellow Christians. The crusaders were content instead to enjoy the spoils of their eastward trip and pay off the Venetians who’d provided their transportation. That pragmatic approach to business—putting gold before God—became a Venetian hallmark.
- Beginning at the turn of the 14th century, the state linked its future to maritime success by provisioning fleets of merchant galleys, escorted by the protection of warships, headed for various ports in the eastern Mediterranean. Ambitiously, they also went to England and the Low Countries.
- By the start of the 11th century, Venice had broken free of the last vestiges of the loose Byzantine control that had marked its early history. Within 100 years, it had become a commune, the doge having been downgraded from his former position as monarch to first among equals.

Social Setup

- In contrast to Florence, Venice never experienced the tensions that resulted from different visions of power offered by a great landed class of feudal nobles and an urban-oriented merchant elite. The former simply didn't exist, and since Venice didn't possess a landed empire for much of its early republican period, its merchants had no aspirations of withdrawing to the countryside.
- Further, Venice was relatively free of two other key conditions that fueled political instability and change in Florence. Because of Venice's location and customary linkage with Byzantium, the city was not divided into Guelph-Ghibelline factions, and because it lacked a large population of disgruntled workers, there were not regular clamorings for popular sovereignty. There were no Venetian equivalents to the Florentine wool workers who rebelled in 1378.
- The laborers who built the great Venetian fleets were well compensated for their efforts by the state. The fabled glassworkers of Murano, too, were kept docile: They were well treated on the one hand and threatened on the other with dire consequences for any suspected proto-industrial espionage that would have threatened Venetian domination of the luxury glass market.
- Such realities made Venice the state and Venice the business one and the same. This conflation played out through the institutionalization of elite control in 1297's closing of the Venetian Great Council, the chief authority of the republic. This prevented any new members from joining the council. It thereby solidified the authority of the 200 or so families and their 1,500–2,000 adult male representatives, aged 25 and older. In a single stroke, the lesser orders were placed on the outside looking in.
- The outside groups staged no rebellion in hopes of enhanced authority. They enjoyed nearly all of the freedoms of the ruling elite without having to shoulder the burden of performing state business at their own expense.



- The Great Council was the font from which power flowed in the republic. From their own noble number, the members elected the senate—that is, the legislative assembly. The senate had a minimum age qualification of 40. The Great Council also elected the officials responsible for the numerous tasks of administration and the implementation of policy. The doge, for much of this period, was largely a ceremonial position elected with a complicated set of procedures.

Expansion

- Venice sought to seek an expansion of its holdings to shore up its security and advance its interests, particularly at the expense of the other maritime republics of Pisa and Genoa. The trio of states had all enjoyed the fruits of crusading and came to be locked in a showdown for primacy.
- Venice's role in the Fourth Crusade and the state's narrowing of its power base allowed Venice to pull ahead. Venice gained at Constantinople's expense, first in picking up the luxury trade in the eastern Mediterranean long dominated by the Byzantines, and second in chipping away parts of Byzantine holdings in Greece and beyond.
- Venice was also aided by the feuding of its two rivals. In 1284, Genoa delivered a devastating blow to Pisa. In 1380, Venice emerged triumphant, defeating Genoa in a naval battle to mark the high point of the War of Chioggia.

On the Mainland

- This trajectory of ascent allowed Venice to embark on what was to be the inviolate foreign policy principle of the republic: to construct a landed empire on the Italian mainland. Beginning in the early 14th century, Venice joined the ranks of the competing states in northern Italy.
- Its motives were obvious. First, the republic desired its own breadbasket, something it didn't possess. Venice had been in the practice of importing its food, an unenviable position. Second, Venice sought better defense

of its economic activity: serving as the purveyor of luxury goods to Europe north of the Alps. Its position was vulnerable to the aggressions of other powers on its non-Adriatic edges, a circumstance that could be redressed with increased control of lands to the west and north.

- The Venetian republic began a methodological and dogged project of imperial growth. It began by tangling with Verona. Located on the Adige River, Verona was the greatest power in the area. Venice emerged triumphant in its struggle with Verona and boldly embarked on a series of conflicts with powers far and wide.
- By the early 15th century, the list of Venetian conquests was growing to include Vicenza, Verona, Bassano, Padua, and Friuli. Only the protracted resistance of Milan, from 1425 to 1454, prevented Venetian supremacy. That Milanese resistance came to be a significant drain on Venetian resources.
- The bad news mounted. The final fall of Constantinople to Mehmed II's Ottoman forces in 1453 meant a loss for Venice, which had enjoyed uniquely advantageous trading privileges in the grand old city. The dynamism of the Turks also destabilized the eastern Mediterranean, another circumstance that exposed Venice to its rivals.
- Such circumstances meant that Venice was receptive to the overtures of peace offered by the Peace of Lodi in 1454. It initiated the uneasy cessation of hostilities among the leading Italian states that stretched until the French invasion of Charles VIII in 1494 and the initiation of the devastating half-century of Habsburg-Valois Wars.
- Still, for Venice, its republic ruled over its empire, with its hard-won land at the northern edge of the Italian boot and its subject lands along the Dalmatian and Greek coasts into the Aegean region, Cyprus, and Crete. The republic possessed a remarkable degree of territorial integrity all the way until another conqueror under a French flag, Napoleon, arrived in 1797.

Venice and the Renaissance

- Renaissance Venice here had a complicated relationship with the chief idea of the Renaissance: humanism. Petrarch himself, the father of humanism, lived for a time in Venice. He left his carefully acquired library to the republic.
- Other highly educated Venetians served as bearers of the humanist standard. For example, noted humanist Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) wrote a work entitled *The History of Venice*, over which he labored for nearly 30 years.

Comparisons to Florence

- The Venetian elites had much less to gain from humanism than their Florentine counterparts. In Florence, republican crises offered opportunities for public debate to shape policy, and skills in rhetoric could make the man. The Venetian republic had less room for the valorization of the individual and preferred instead the celebration of the might of the merchant state.
- In Florence, humanism proved a valuable training ground for people seeking entry to service in the secretariat; however, in Venice, these so-called lower positions were reserved for the non-elites. Whereas selection as chancellor in Florence was a mark of great distinction for a man of learning, in Venice, there was far less drama connected to selection for leadership.
- The Venetian patricians, closely and jealously guarding their own privileges, had far more interest in the practical education of their sons. They contended that training in commercial and navigational ventures were more valuable than studying letters. A living foreign language could be useful, for example, in matters of business. That wasn't the case for Ciceronian Latin.

- The influence of new artistic fashions and techniques was much more marked in Venice. Examples include the architecture, paintings, and sculptures of St. Mark's Basilica and the Ducal Palace as well as public and private monuments. Venice contributed much to the dynamism of the later stages of the artistic Renaissance.

Suggested Reading

Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice*.

Lane, *Venice*.

Norwich, *A History of Venice*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What did Venice have in common with fellow republic Florence, and what were the most pronounced differences?
- 2 Why did the legacy of Rome have a limited impact on Venice?
- 3 How did the privileged Venetian oligarchy protect and project its power?
- 4 Why did Venice come to seek a landed empire, and how did that quest impact the republic?

LECTURE 7

Renaissance Rome and the Papal States



his lecture investigates the political and intellectual conditions of Rome as the Renaissance vectors of classicism and republicanism played over the Italian Peninsula. Rome's legacy as the pope's seat of spiritual and secular authority meant that the city was never quite secure or free of contestation. The role of the new learning in Rome challenged the wisdom of centuries and powerfully exposed the dangers that humanism could unleash to the status quo.

Cola di Rienzo

- In the middle of the 14th century, the Italian leader Cola di Rienzo was drawing lessons from antiquity and seeking actively to put them into place in his own world. He was also involved in a quest for vengeance against a noble who'd murdered his younger brother, which was reputed to have contributed to the animosity he held toward the Roman elites.
- Rienzo rose as a young man to some prominence in his city, performing diplomatic and administrative duties that would take him to the papal seat in Avignon and earn him preferment from Pope Clement VI. The years between 1344 and 1347 saw Rienzo return to his native city again and embark on what would turn out to be his life's work: the liberation of Rome from the manipulations of both pope and emperor and to bring Rome back to its ancient republican self.
- He gathered a core of supporters and plotted an insurrection that would return the city to the people. The conspirators struck on May 20, 1347, unseating the aristocratic government and declaring the establishing of a new Roman republic.
- For seven months, Rienzo controlled the city. However, he struggled to maintain control and was ousted from power by an alliance of the Roman elites and the papacy, both of which were outraged at their reduction in authority.
- Rienzo soldiered on from exile, seeking the support of the greatest enemy to this entrenched Roman elite: the new German emperor. Rienzo traveled in 1350 to lobby Emperor Charles IV (r. 1347–1378) for aid, but Charles demurred. Rienzo spent time on the run from his enemies before being bound over for imprisonment in Avignon in the summer of 1352, where he was slated to stand trial for heresy.
- Rienzo's liberation came at the instigation of new Pope Innocent VI (r. 1352–1362). Innocent was working on a restoration project of his own, wishing to return the papacy to Rome from its exile in the north at Avignon, and he believed Rienzo's popularity would assist him in making that goal a reality.

- The complex allegiances at play in the drama of Cola di Rienzo cut to the heart of the realities facing Rome coming into and throughout the Renaissance. It was the site of aspirations and inspiration, and yet it often descended into a fractious, unstable, cutthroat chaos.
- Rienzo staged a second comeback in early 1354. However, this second act would prove as unsuccessful as its predecessor: He was killed in an uprising led by political rivals on October 8.



Cola di Rienzo (1313–1354)

Enhancement of Papal Authority

- The enhancement of papal authority is one of the most important processes of the Middle Ages. From the bishop of Rome's position as one of five patriarchs of the Christian church to the spiritual leader of Western Christendom, the rise of the medieval papacy is breathtaking in its scale and scope.
- The papacy drew on a trio of key justifications of its vision of its authority, both spiritual and territorial, and all were wrapped up with Rome itself. The Petrine Doctrine in the book of Matthew recognized the heirs of St. Peter as the “rock” upon which Jesus built his church, and Peter was the first bishop of Rome. The 4th-century Donation of Constantine recounted a transfer of authority from the Roman emperor Constantine (r. 306–337) to Pope Sylvester (r. 314–335). The 8th-century Donation of Pepin (756), a land grant from the Frankish king to the papacy, established the Papal States in the territories around Rome.

- These ideas and others helped to communicate that there was something special about the bishop of Rome's authority that set the pope above all others in Christendom and made him a prince. The pope was, however, a prince without an army. Popes needed to rely on other protectors, developing, for example, a mutually beneficial but tension-filled relationship with the Frankish kings.
- In medieval conceptions of authority, there were three leaders—monarchs, popes, and aristocrats—but the amount of authority was itself finite, initiating intense competition among these three groups. The acquisition of power by one would, in this way of thinking, correspond with a reduction of power by the others.
- The city of Rome was at the center of this competition in key ways. It was the site of imperial ambitions by the German monarchs who came to be known as the holy Roman emperors. It was the papal seat and the capital of the Papal States. It was also populated by ancient noble families who considered it their birthright to wield control over the city and its government.
- This battle saw the three forces rise and fall as they jockeyed for power with one another. The pontificate of Pope Innocent III (r. 1198–1216) represents the zenith of papal authority: Innocent assisted his godson Frederick II (r. 1215–1250) to reclaim his inheritance and oust Otto IV as holy Roman emperor. Innocent also helped bring King John of England (1199–1216) to his knees in a series of developments that would lead to the Magna Carta. Additionally, he called the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 that asserted the pope's power to make doctrine for the whole church.

Fall of Papal Authority

- The papacy's time at the top eventually drew to a close. Within a century, Pope Boniface VIII (r. 1294–1303) had been humbled by the French king, and the papacy itself had become a French institution. Boniface's great rival was King Philip IV of France (r. 1285–1314). Philip was locked in combat with Edward I of England and strapped for resources.



🌀 Pope Boniface VIII (c. 1235–1303) 🌀

- In what represented a major breach in protocol, Philip made a bold move: He operationalized a scheme to tax his French clergy without papal consent. Boniface objected and attempted to mount counterarguments that issued sweeping statements of his own authority.
- Philip's eventual response was swift and devastating. He dispatched soldiers to confront Boniface in Anagni, and on their arrival, they pillaged and plundered the papal villa and threatened the pope with forced transport to France.

- Boniface's captivity was short lived, but its consequences were not. The aged pope died just a few weeks later, suffering from shock and humiliation. A French cleric—Clement V (r. 1305–1314)—was selected pope, and he moved the papal seat away from Rome. Clement relocated the papal court to Avignon, located on the Rhone River, where it was within sight of French territory and, some muttered, under the thumb of French kings.
- There, the papal court would stay for seven decades in what has become known as the Avignon Exile. The pope's withdrawal from Rome meant the city was abandoned to the ambitions of its leading, feuding factions.

The Western Schism

- In 1376, Pope Gregory XI (r. 1370–1378) restored the papacy to Rome, out of a sense of duty and as a response to mounting criticism. The Rome to which he returned, however, was just as unruly as ever. After Gregory's death in 1378, the pressures of the Roman mobs resulted in the election by the harassed cardinals, many of whom were French, of an Italian: Pope Urban VI (r. 1378–1389).
- To the cardinals' dismay, the new pope seemed determined to curb clerical abuses, among them the overweening power of the cardinals themselves. In response, they mutinied, declaring his election invalid and voting in favor of one of their own, Robert of Geneva (r. 1378–1394).
- Urban responded by excommunicating the rogue cardinals and their newly elected pope, initiating an even greater fissure within Christendom: the Western Schism. From 1378 to 1417, Christendom possessed two popes, one ruling from Rome and the other from Avignon. That divided the loyalties of Christians throughout Europe. For a period near the end of the schism, there were even three living popes.
- The Council of Constance (1414–1418) took as one of its chief aims the resolution to the plurality of popes. They accomplished the task with the election of Martin V (r. 1417–1431) and the deposition of the three rivals. Rome was a one-pope city once more. One subsequent pope was

Sixtus IV (r. 1471–1484), whose ambitious plan to shore up the pope's political control included masterminding the elimination of the Medici in Florence in the conspiracy known as the Pazzi Plot.

- Sixtus IV's reputation for ambition and cunning is eclipsed by the last 15th-century pope. His reign name was Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503), but he was born Rodrigo Borgia. He relied on his power of persuasion, threats, and money to advance on the papal throne itself.

Humanism in Rome

- Rome was more than the playground of the popes and their families during the Renaissance. Although Florence gets the lion's share of the credit for producing humanists during the Renaissance, a number of them also hailed from Rome.
- Rome, for example, became the headquarters for Renaissance Ciceronianism, which is the attempt to institutionalize the supremacy of the Latin of ancient Roman orator and statesman Cicero. This program took as its aims the standardization of Cicero's particular brand of written elegance and the promulgation of its use. Papal secretary Pietro Bembo was one of the movement's staunchest proponents.
- Roman humanists even included popes in their number. Pope Pius II had earned a poet laureate's crown before his ascension to the holiest of offices. However, profound differences separated the values and goals of humanism from those of the Christian church, especially as advanced in the curriculum of scholasticism and as expressed in the revival of interest in ancient philosophy.
- No career might bring those intellectual and practical tensions into greater focus than that of famed scholar Lorenzo Valla. Valla was a Roman native who studied with Renaissance schoolmaster Vittorino de Feltre. Valla's proficiency with language, including a mastery of Latin and Greek, earned him a professorship at the University of Pavia, which was itself a dynamic institution in the new learning.

Valla's Work

- After four years in residence at Pavia, Valla found himself at odds with a popular instructor in the field of law, Bartolus de Saxferrato (1313–1357). Valla decided to depart his university post.
- Valla then became an itinerant scholar, speaking and lecturing in a number of cities. Valla helped shape the linguistic direction of the Italian Renaissance with his *Six Books of the Elegances of the Latin Language*, a manual of Latin syntax and grammar heralded as an important institutionalization of Ciceronian Latin as well as a denigration of post-classical Latin, including the Latin of the medieval church, as barbaric and unaccomplished.
- While serving at the court of Alfonso V of Aragon (r. 1416–1458), Valla embarked on the work for which he enjoys his greatest fame: *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio* (translation: *The Treatise on the Donation of Constantine*). It represents a masterful work of textual and historical criticism that served as a model for scholars in the Renaissance and far beyond.



🌀 Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457) 🌀

- In the treatise, Valla turns his considerable intellect to broad questions of textual authenticity and the received tradition, using as his case study one of the most famous fakes in history: the Donation of Constantine. This was the document purported to authorize the bishop of Rome's worldly authority, courtesy of the gift of Roman emperor Constantine the Great (r. 306–337). It had been pointed to for centuries to justify the pope's temporal authority.

- Valla discovered that the document could not possibly have originated during the days of Constantine. In his treatise, Valla carefully and systematically laid out the grounds for his diagnosis of the piece as a fraud. For example, he pointed out errors of language usage and inconsistencies of text and time.
- He also found no contemporary textual evidence of Constantine's bequest, something he considered strange, given the significance of such a momentous gift. He masterfully refuted claims that this corroborating evidence existed, calling out by name those sources cited by others that were, in fact, empty of reference to the Donation of Constantine.
- Valla also analyzed the two historical figures at the center of this alleged granting of authority: Emperor Constantine and his bishop of Rome, Sylvester. Valla concluded that the transfer was completely out of character for both men.
- Valla's sharp words and wits were welcomed at an Aragonese court then feuding with the pope. However, the Roman humanist would find his continued polemics less enthusiastically embraced by King Alfonso after the ruler of Aragon made his peace with the papacy in 1443.
- Valla nearly fell afoul of an inquisitorial trial over his investigation into the issue of whether the Apostles' Creed had been composed by the Twelve Apostles. His deliverance came at the hands of King Alfonso himself. The humanist then returned home to Rome, making his own peace with the pope and earning the post of scribe and a later appointment as a papal secretary.

Suggested Reading

Buchard, *At the Court of the Borgia*.

Collins, *Greater than Emperor*.

Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 How did Rome's connection to its ancient past and to the Christian church make it a space both of inspiration and of contestation during the Renaissance?
- 2 Who was Cola di Rienzo, and what role did he play in Roman politics?
- 3 Cola di Rienzo failed to institute "good government" in the city of Rome. How would Romans have defined "good government" during the period of the Renaissance?
- 4 What factors led to the Avignon Exile and the Western Schism, and what circumstances brought a return of the papacy to Rome?

LECTURE 8

Renaissance Italy's Princes and Rivals



For all of its beauty and creativity, Renaissance Italy was also a place of endemic violence, where balance and stability were often in short supply. For example, the warlord Francesco Sforza (1401–1466) made himself master of Milan. Previous lectures discussed the two great Renaissance republics of Florence and Venice as well as the pope's dominions in central Italy. This lecture looks elsewhere in Italy, first at the two remaining great power players: Naples and Milan. Then, it examines the eclipse of the age of the republics by the age of the tyrants. At the turn of the 14th century, a number of elite families and strongmen played on the weaknesses of merchant oligarchies, sweeping into positions of authority they would enjoy as long as their cunning, martial prowess, and ability to sire heirs held.

Naples and Sicily

- This lecture's exploration of Renaissance government begins in the south of Italy. The lands of Naples and nearby island of Sicily had for centuries been an intense battleground. The Byzantines, Muslims, Normans, and German holy Roman emperors all jockeyed for position, with the pope frequently throwing in his lot with one group then another, in the effort to safeguard his own interests. Pope Innocent III, for example, created an alliance first against and then in support of Hohenstaufen ruler Frederick II.
- One of Innocent's successors helped set the south on the trajectory it would follow for several hundred years and, ironically, allow powers north of the Alps to make Italy their own battleground. That dubious distinction goes to Pope Clement IV (r. 1265–1268). In seeking to dislodge the Hohenstaufen emperor in the south, Clement invited Charles d'Anjou (r. 1262–1285) to Naples in 1266.
- Charles's successors, the Angevins, expelled the Hohenstaufen threat and created a dynasty that ruled Naples for nearly two centuries. Their control of Sicily, though, was less successful: Within 20 years, they lost the island to King Peter III of Aragon, who'd successfully claimed Sicily on behalf of his wife, one of the Hohenstaufens.
- The two kingdoms, Naples and Sicily, were ruled independently by their respective dynasties until 1442. The Aragonese emerged victorious against the Angevins and forged the so-called Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. It was under the leadership of Alfonso V of Aragon (who became Alfonso I and ruled until 1458).
- The reunion of Naples and Sicily was short-lived; the kingdoms were divided again at Alfonso's death, this time among the Aragonese themselves. The Angevin legacy in the south did not disappear; Angevin claims reverted instead to the French crown. This circumstance allowed the French king Charles VIII, with the encouragement of Milan, to bring his army to Italy in 1494. In turn, that initiated the devastating five-decade conflict of the Habsburg-Valois Wars, which would destabilize Italy's Renaissance.

Verona and Padua

- The lords of southern Italy ruled by virtue of their ancient royal blood. In the north, though, different sorts of men came to rule. Even in the age of republicanism, the idea of shared governance was never without its challengers. There were still plenty of wealthy, privileged, ambitious men who sought to expand their own authority at the expense of others.
- Serving as examples are the communes of Padua and Verona, whose path to despotism during the 13th century was in part shaped by political developments beyond Italy. In Verona, the harsh rule of a governor who'd been installed by Emperor Frederick II led the city to identify the head of a local noble family to serve as governor.
- If they'd intended their pick to secure the autonomy of the formerly vibrant commune, they chose poorly. Members of the Scaligeri family instead transformed the offer of leadership into lordship, ruling the city without even lip service to republican ideals for more than a century.
- In response to Veronese expansion, nearby Padua made its own bid for continued independence by turning to Jacopo da Carrara to serve as "perpetual captain" in 1318. That invitation led to a century of signorial control by the Carrara family until 1405, when both Verona and Padua would be absorbed by Venetian ambitions for their westward empire.

Events in Milan and Florence

- Milan, like many of the other communes, was destabilized by factionalism. The supporters of popes and emperors—the Guelf and Ghibelline parties, respectively—subverted republicanism for their own cause. The archbishop of Milan, Ottone Visconti (1207–1295), saw opportunity in the struggle. Defeating rivals in 1277, Visconti pivoted into a position of domination over the city. He left the government in the hands of a nephew in 1287 when he retired to a monastery.
- The Visconti faction had grand plans, and they had the might to bring defeat to much of Lombardy. They also threatened the great republics of Venice and Florence, and perhaps even prompted the creation of civic humanism in Florence.

- In 1395, the power of the Visconti was legitimized with a ducal title by the papacy (in return for a massive payment). This first Visconti was Duke Giangaleazzo. His drive southward into Tuscany nearly toppled the Florentine republic.
- The Florentine humanists touted the conflict as a colossal clash between freedom and tyranny, and they needed all of the republican rhetoric they could muster when the Milanese surrounded the city and dug in to bring the Florentines to heel. The threat abated when Giangaleazzo died from the plague.

The Sforza

- Later in the century, Visconti control gave way to the Sforza family. Two sons of Bianca Maria Visconti and the mercenary general Francesco Sforza would take turns leading the duchy: Galeazzo (r. 1466–1476) and Ludovico, who guided the state as regent on behalf of his nephew Giangaleazzo II (r. 1476–1494).
- When Giangaleazzo II died, Ludovico (r. 1494–1498) ruled as duke himself with wife Beatrice d'Este at his side. It was Ludovico's political maneuverings that brought the French to Italy in 1494 and, consequently, also brought Ludovico's own fall from power.
- Milanese independence was a casualty of the Sforza as well: The state would be dominated by the French until 1535 and then by the Spanish until the War of the Spanish Succession resulted in the dismemberment of Spanish holdings.

Mantua and Urbino

- Despite the relative instability of the time, two smaller Italian states became cultural dynamos during the Renaissance, flourishing under the patronage of their lords and ladies: Mantua and Urbino. Like Milan, Mantua was one of the members of the Lombard League that triumphed over Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.



- However, Mantua would lose its commune identity to the aspirations of the house of Gonzaga in 1328 during a period of intense rivalry between the Guelph and Ghibelline factions in the city. The Gonzaga served as imperial vicars; their allegiance to the German emperors was actively maintained through diplomatic contacts and marriages.
- Mantua was also a leading center for the educational reform that laid the foundation for Renaissance humanism. For example, Vittorino da Feltre (1378–1446), who was a chief proponent of the new learning, received the patronage of Mantuan despot Gianfrancesco Gonzaga. Vittorino's school, known as the House of Joy, numbered among its pupils Gonzaga's own children and the children of other elite families, both male and female.
- The Gonzaga reached the height of their cultural authority under the rule of Francesco II Gonzaga (r. 1494–1519), who was rivaled in fame by his wife, Isabella d'Este (1474–1539). Mantua became a powerful draw for artists and writers. Among those Renaissance figures who counted Isabella as a patron were Raphael, Titian, Michelangelo, Castiglione, and Pietro Aretino.
- Duke Federico da Montefeltro of Urbino (1422–1482) was one of the students of the Gonzaga-created House of Joy. Although he embarked on a long career as a skilled mercenary, Federico shared little else with many of the mercenary captains of the Renaissance, like the always-scheming Francesco Sforza of Milan (who frequently shifted his loyalties to the highest bidder).
- Federico da Montefeltro earned a reputation for honesty and generosity—as well as a massive fortune, gratefully supplied by the employers who valued his loyalty. Federico also had a deep and abiding devotion to learning that shaped his life and helped turn his court into a capital city of the Renaissance. That court was presided over for two extraordinary generations, first by Federico and his wife Battista Sforza, and then by their sole surviving son Guidobaldo and his wife Elisabetta Gonzaga.

- One of Duke Federico's great projects was the construction of a marvelous palace full of artistic masterpieces. Another of Federico's projects was the creation of an expansive library. Housing more than 1,100 volumes, Federico's library featured editions of works of classical literature. The library was augmented by treatises of medieval Muslim scholars Ibn-Sina and Ibn Rushd, better known in the West as Avicenna and Averroes.

Suggested Reading

Cockram, *Isabella d'Este and Francesco Gonzaga*.
Kohl, *Padua under the Carrara*.
Martines, *Power and Imagination*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 How did the transition from citizen militias to mercenaries impact Italian states during the 14th and 15th centuries?
- 2 What forces and individuals most shaped the rivalries in southern Italy?
- 3 How did the ambitions of Milan both spur Renaissance developments and initiate troubles for the peninsula?
- 4 Why did republicanism fail during the Renaissance?

LECTURE 9

Renaissance Man as Political Animal

his lecture focuses on three men—Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529), and Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472)—whose lives and works all exemplify different iterations of that perhaps most well-known creation of the Renaissance: the Renaissance man. The common element that binds Renaissance men together is their cultivation of a level excellence in multiple areas. This lecture will make the concept a bit more precise by historicizing it.

The Renaissance Man Defined

- The Renaissance man can perhaps best be understood as an educational and political ideal, a man as well schooled in the art of warfare as he was the languages of classical antiquity and love. He could exhibit all of the requisite courtly graces as easily as he could pluck up an instrument and contribute an engaging tune.
- Key to the Renaissance man was the concept of modeling—that is, finding exemplars whose personal lives and public careers could serve as a source of inspiration and even provide a blueprint and sort of virtual counselor in times of trouble. The ancient world provided marvelous exemplars, as Petrarch suggested in his writings. Perhaps, then, it's unsurprising that the men of the Renaissance took up politics as a chief virtue, so serious a concern were issues pertaining to the nature and operation of government among the ancients.

Leon Battista Alberti

- Leon Battista Alberti is often pointed to as emblematic of the Renaissance man. The son of a prominent exiled Florentine, his talents were many. He was a renowned architect, designing churches, elite residences, and military fortifications designed to withstand cannon fire. He was also a cryptographer and an Italian grammarian. He dabbled in astronomy and geography, and was the author of plays and novels, among other pursuits.
- Most famously, he wrote an autobiography in which he refers to himself in the third person. This description of his accomplishments is dazzling, and he doesn't shy from according himself praise: "His genius [he wrote] was so versatile that you might almost judge all the fine arts to be his."
- He used his autobiography to provide a catalogue of his achievements in the visual and literary arts. He also devoted time to his physical acumen and noted his ability to resist vengeful impulses. All in all, he was an accomplished man, if one prone to self-praise.

Baldassare Castiglione

- The most famous text associated with this lecture's second Renaissance man, Baldassare Castiglione, is more focused on the intersection of individualism and service. In his *Book of the Courtier*, Castiglione offered to posterity one of the most famous descriptions of Renaissance court life and the courtly gentleman.
- Castiglione was himself of noble birth, with a family seat near Mantua. An accident while in the service of Urbino's vaunted mercenary army led to a period of convalescence at the court of Guidobaldo da Montefeltro and his wife, Elisabetta Gonzaga. That visit stretched into an 11-year stay in Urbino, marked by both personal and professional satisfaction, largely as the result of Castiglione's platonic devotion to Duchess Elisabetta and entrance into her courtly circle.
- The book, set in 1506 but begun in 1508 as Duke Guidobaldo's health declined, takes the form of four dialogues. Each is associated with a successive night's conversations among the residents of the duke's court. Three of the four dialogues take as their aim a description of the perfect courtier. The other comments on characteristics befitting the ideal court lady.
- Even the three books that focus on men, though, are not without the strong influence of women. It is Duchess Elisabetta and, later, Emilia Pia who control the dialogue, a reminder that the duke's illness has created a female-dominated court.



🌀 Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529) 🌀

- According to Castiglione's book, the ideal courtier must be of noble birth owing to favorable public opinion. He should also be attractive and skilled in the arts of war, although not overly brutish. His most important quality is dedication to his master: the prince.

Niccolò Machiavelli

- To understand the Renaissance man of Niccolò Machiavelli, it's essential to take into account his own personal and political context. That involves the history of Florence following the death of powerful ruler Lorenzo de' Medici.
- Lorenzo's son, Piero, took over after his death in 1492. After a two-year interval, the Medici were expelled from a state then under the sway of social critic and mystic Girolamo Savonarola and reeling from the invasion of the French king Charles VIII.
- In some ways, Lorenzo played the seminal role in initiating the Medici's declining popularity. In 1491, he invited Savonarola, then already a preacher and theologian, to serve as prior of Florence's San Marco monastery.
- Almost immediately upon his assumption of power in San Marco, Savonarola went on the warpath. He offered scathing indictments of the institutional church and of the Medici, whom he charged with subverting Florence's republican ideals. This was why, after the expulsion of Piero de' Medici, the Florentines rallied around Savonarola to guide their newly restored republic.



🌀 Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) 🌀

- Savonarola determined that the best way to proceed was to target the sin and corruption with which he considered the city to be rife. He pointed in particular to the blasphemous influence of the classical tradition and rebuked the Florentines for their moral failings. He exhorted the Florentines to fear God, to love the common good, to love one another, and to love justice.
- Savonarola overreached his role as critic, though, in subjecting the church to his blistering commentary. His continued exposure of clerical errors reached upward toward the papacy itself. Pope Alexander VI was not content to be the object of Savonarola's abuses.
- Savonarola was excommunicated in May 1497, and almost exactly one year later, he was executed, having lost support to a counter-faction in Florence seeking an alternate vision of republicanism. It was this second version of the restored republic following Savonarola's failed experiment that Niccolò Machiavelli served.

Machiavelli's Rise and Fall

- By the time of his selection as second chancellor in 1498, Machiavelli seems to have earned a reputation for his opposition to Savonarola. The victory of the anti-Savonarola faction gave the appearance of establishing for Machiavelli a successful career in service to his state.
- As second chancellor, Machiavelli presided over the government's correspondence with its territories and localities throughout Tuscany. His tasks were augmented with various diplomatic assignments as well as secretarial work with the Ten of Liberty and Peace, a Florentine military council. After 1507, he served in a post that put him in a supervisory position over a new militia comprised of men drawn from Florence's subject territories in Tuscany.
- Machiavelli's political ascendancy came to an abrupt halt with the restoration of Medici authority in 1512. The citizen militia to which Machiavelli had devoted so much time and attention never even got the opportunity to act in defense of Florentine liberty. The Florentine government succumbed to chaos and collapse.

- The Medici returned in triumph and reestablished their control. Machiavelli was dismissed from his post and put on a watch list, being required not to leave Florentine territory for a year. A mere three months later, he was associated with a plot to remove the Medici. He protested his involvement, but to no avail. He was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to life imprisonment, a fate he was spared as the result of a general amnesty.

The Prince

- After his release, Machiavelli retreated from public life and dedicated himself to literary pursuits, of which the political treatise *The Prince* has come to be his most famous product. Though the book is dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, he apparently was not its originally intended recipient. Machiavelli had instead identified Guiliano de' Medici, Lorenzo's uncle and the brother of newly installed Medici pope Leo X, as a potential patron.
- Ever pragmatic, Machiavelli followed Guiliano's changing fortunes. Guiliano fell out of favor with his brother, and Machiavelli retrained his eye on young Lorenzo instead. It was to this member of the next generation that Machiavelli appealed.
- *The Prince* is a complex text. It valorizes the authoritarian exercise of power in stark, uncompromising language. Machiavelli blends lessons from the ancient past with a deep consideration of the present in *The Prince*. His much-decried celebration of the actions of forceful leader Cesare Borgia is but a single angle of a text that discusses princely rule and also takes as its focus the state of the peninsula as a whole.
- Machiavelli uses the text to call for Italian unification as a means of ending the destructive external threats the Italian states faced from France and the Empire. He intimates that a strong leader—a man willing to test his virtue and to bend fortune to his will—is the one who can free Italy from its current troubles.

- Ultimately, *The Prince* is evidence of an astute and calculating political mind at work. Machiavelli wasn't a humanist, but he does represent another version of the Renaissance man, for whom politics was the very stuff of life.

Suggested Reading

Brown, *The Medici in Florence*.

Martines, *Fire in the City*.

Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Is a generic label like Renaissance man useful for an age of celebrated for its individualism?
- 2 How do you think Castiglione's perfect courtier would have fared at the court of Machiavelli's prince?

LECTURE 10

Women and the Italian Renaissance Court

his lecture steps inside the 15th- and 16th-century Italian courts to investigate the ways in which a number of smart, powerful, and cunning women helped steer the course of the Renaissance. It examines the concept of the Renaissance woman in general, women's roles in education and patronage, and a notable courtesan.

The Renaissance Woman

- A prevalent concept is that of the Renaissance man, who emerged with the Italian Renaissance. The Renaissance man ushered in new ideas about masculinity and marked a profound break with many of the gender ideals that dominated the Middle Ages. However, despite the activities of many notable women, no new concept of femininity emerged akin to that which developed for masculinity.
- A Renaissance woman might have sported different fashions than her medieval counterpart, but the general expectations of both were roughly parallel. In many ways, the ancient trio of chastity, silence, and obedience still formed the core of approved feminine behavior into the Renaissance centuries. Women were still primarily identified as daughters, wives, and mothers, under firm patriarchal control of fathers, husbands, and sons.
- Many women in the Italian Renaissance could draw on neither the political nor the economic power their male counterparts could command. In all of the activities that mattered most to Renaissance men—civic activity, humanistic study, artistic endeavor, business enterprise, and so on—male achievements towered over those of women (where they could be found), both in number and in perception of impact and historical significance.
- Rather than comparing Renaissance women with men, it is perhaps more constructive to consider the activities in which women did participate. This lecture will keep its focus on the women connected to the Italian Renaissance courts, who possessed greater privilege than their non-noble counterparts.

Education

- Among the lordly families of the Italian courts during the Renaissance, there was a tradition of educating daughters, often alongside sons. Great schoolmasters such as Vittorino da Feltre had female pupils drawn from these great families, and the question of female education was the subject of considerable interest and commentary by elite men.

- For example, Leonardo Bruni, the longtime chancellor of the city of Florence, wrote a letter on the subject of education in 1405 to Lady Battista da Montefeltro. She was the wife of Galeazzo Malatesta (the lord of Pesaro) and the daughter of Duke Antonio II of Urbino. The letter offered a particularly restricted curriculum. Bruni claimed that rhetoric was “outside the province of women” and that new learning celebrating classical ideals and values would be lost on a woman for lack of application.
- Bruni continued his letter to Lady Battista by enumerating the subjects he felt “properly open” to women, with history, religion, morals, and poetry chief among them. Commentaries like Bruni’s reflect a gendered vision of Renaissance education that trained men to impact their world and women, especially those of the court, to beautify and dignify it.
- Evidence of education for highborn daughters bears out the familial traditions of female education in the Italian lordships. This speaks to the existence of a shared educational culture among women; education became a female practice among these families and made female learning a recognized accomplishment. Such a pattern of female education existed among the Sforza of Milan, for example.
- A case study is Bianca Maria Visconti, whose status as the illegitimate daughter of Duke Filippo Maria did not prevent her from acquiring a humanist education, perhaps because the duke



🌀 Bianca Maria Visconti (1425–1468) 🌀

had no legitimate heirs. She was raised in the Visconti castle, where an impressive variety of texts in Latin, Italian, and other languages served as her schoolbooks.

- Bianca's marriage to Francesco Sforza, who ultimately became master of Milan, made her a duchess. She proved a capable guardian of her husband's lands and title during his absences from the duchy, and she won a reputation for her learning and her clear thinking.

Patronage

- Patronage was one way that noble women were able to contribute to the flowering of Italian Renaissance culture. In a society that commodified beauty and learning, women's ability to serve as brokers of fashion and taste through patronage was significant. Through their commissioning of art, music, poetry, prose, architectural projects, and more, women were able to wield considerable cultural capital.
- The spaces of the courts, then, were their chance to assemble a dazzling array of talent and to display an impressive Renaissance product. Female patrons subsidized some of the most famous artists of the Renaissance. Duchess Isabella, wife of Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua, provides a notable example.
- Isabella's marriage to Francesco was not a happy one, but she channeled some of her considerable energy into establishing Mantua as a major site of patronage and herself as an arbiter of style and culture. She was a prodigious letter writer and corresponded with leading humanists including Pietro Aretino, Ludovico Ariosto, Pietro Bembo, and Baldassare Castiglione.
- The payroll list of artists commissioned to paint for Isabella includes names like Giovanni Bellini, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Titian, Andrea Mantegna, Antonio da Correggio, and Lorenzo Costa, among others. Isabella also curated an impressive collection of ancient Roman art.

Courtesans

- This lecture closes with a look at a final category of elite women: the *cortigiana onesta* (“honored courtesan”). These women were celebrated for their grace, beauty, and refinement. Their lovers were men of power and prestige.
- The courtesans occupied a social and sexual space outside of the constraints of contemporary ideals of femininity. They possessed a degree of freedom denied to most women to pursue their talents without fear of the loss of reputation, although the source of that freedom was quite different from the noble ladies of the court.
- The term *cortigiana* is derived from the masculine *cortigiano*, which refers to a man who served at court. The *cortigiana* was, in fact, the female equivalent of the courtier. The residences of the most accomplished and glamorous courtesans became an alternative kind of court themselves. Within these environments, women interacted with literary figures and artists while cultivating their own intellectual life.

Veronica Franco

- Veronica Franco (1546–1591) serves as a case study of courtesans. Franco was a native of Venice, where a reputed 10 percent of the population worked in the sex trade. Veronica’s own mother was one of them. She appeared, as Franco later noted, in a directory of courtesans in 1565. That same list also included Franco’s own name.
- Franco was the only daughter of four children born to her parents, and under the tutelage of her brothers’ teachers, she gained a fine education. She also gained a husband at a young age, but the marriage didn’t last. At 18, Franco was pregnant with another man’s child, having separated speedily from her husband to pursue a career as a courtesan.
- Franco’s clients were men of high status. When King Henry III of France paid a state visit to Venice in 1574, for example, Franco was one of those selected to entertain the king, an endorsement of her famous wit and musical ability.

- Note that Franco didn't celebrate the sex trade, or minimize the dangers of a life on the margins of polite society. She warned that, "It's a most wretched thing, contrary to human reason, to subject one's body and labor to a slavery terrifying even to think of." Franco wrote from experience about the fragility of what looked in some ways to be a charmed life: When she accused a tutor she'd hired for her sons of stealing, he denounced her to the Inquisition in 1580 on a charge of witchcraft.
- Franco's talented self-defense, coupled with assistance from the powerful men in her circle, led to an acquittal. However, the remainder of her life was plagued with financial troubles, and she died in poverty at age 45.
- A large deal of what scholars know about her life is courtesy of her writing. In writing of her experiences, in both poetic and prose forms, Franco was not unique among courtesans. She serves as a single representative of a group of Renaissance women—Tullia d'Aragona of Rome and fellow Venetian Gaspara Stampa among them—who cultivated and exhibited their literary skills in a way that helped support the entrance of the women into contemporary literary culture.
- Franco was a wildly successful editor; she collected poetry from the men in the literary circle of longtime patron Domenico Venier for inclusion in anthologies she dedicated to leading members of the Venetian elite. In 1575, Franco published a collection of her own poetry, the *Terze rime*. The style it represented, a challenge-and-response pattern of 11-syllable verses, is a testament to Franco's creativity and verbal acumen.
- She didn't shy away from using her platform to advance the capabilities of women. For example, she wrote:

When we women, too, have weapons and training,
 we will be able to prove to all men
 that we have hands and feet and hearts like yours;
 and though we may be tender and delicate,
 some men who are delicate are also strong,
 and some, though coarse and rough, are cowards.

- Franco also published a collection of 50 letters that offers a glimpse into her life and thoughts, cataloging activities both mundane and meaningful. These letters are evocative of similar collections by ancient authors, most notably Cicero and Seneca, and her male contemporaries. They reveal a woman with deep passions, pronounced opinions, and a strong sense of self.

Suggested Reading

Kaborycha, ed., *A Corresponding Renaissance*.
Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?"
Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Why did noble families cultivate female learning? What does that suggest about the role and expectations of elite women?
- 2 Do you consider patronage an active or a passive activity? What kind of influence could female patrons have on artistic trends?

LECTURE 11

Painting in the Early Italian Renaissance



This is the first in a sequence of lectures taking Renaissance art as their focus. Said lectures will emphasize the historical context of art they consider. In particular, a focal point will be the Renaissance's emphasis on the experience of being human and the celebration of the human body. Another focal point will be the function of art within both its public and private spaces.

Masaccio

- In the space of a six-year career, the achievements of Tommaso di Giovanni di Simone Cassai (1401–1428) left behind a legacy of creative and innovative genius cited by leading artists of the Renaissance as an inspiration for their own work. He is better known by his nickname: Masaccio.
- Masaccio's early commissions included pieces on traditional religious themes, one example being a multi-panel altarpiece including a rendering of the famous Adoration of the Magi scene for a church in Pisa. His trademark style includes human figures with weight and solidity, rendered in deep, vibrant hues that add a liveliness and realism absent in the pieces of his medieval predecessors and even his contemporaries.



🌀 Masaccio (1401–1428) 🌀

- His series of frescoes—paintings on wet plaster—of the Brancacci Chapel in the Church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence would become Masaccio's greatest masterpiece. For example, his depiction of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden has the power to startle and to impress.
- Another of his works, *Holy Trinity*, demonstrates his innovative application of linear perspective. A single, central vanishing point creates the illusion of depth within the flat surface of the painting. Note that linear perspective owes its Renaissance discovery to Masaccio's friend and influence, the architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446).
- Masaccio didn't get to enjoy the fruits of his great achievements. After leaving the Brancacci Chapel to the work of others to complete, Masaccio journeyed to Rome for new projects, but he died shortly after his arrival in the Christian and pagan Roman capital. He was 27 years old.

- However, Masaccio had managed to leave a legacy that helped shape the Renaissance. For example, according to contemporary accounts, young Michelangelo copied Masaccio's works during his artistic apprenticeship.

The Medieval Art Scene

- To understand how revolutionary Masaccio's artistic innovations were, it's necessary to consider the art scene of the later medieval world. Medieval art doesn't boast household names, like those of the artists of the Renaissance, but instead contains the work of anonymous craftsmen and artisans, many of whose individual identities have been lost to time.
- Researchers don't know many names in part because of the ways items were produced during the Middle Ages. Artisans began their training as young apprentices, and they learned their craft in the workshop of a master. That master would have been a member of guild, which regulated the quality of items produced.
- Individualism was actively discouraged; mimicry was the order of the day. Apprentices copied the works of their masters until they could reliably reproduce the style for themselves. Standardization was the key to ensuring a satisfied customer.
- The medieval world of Christian Europe was a decorated one, although perhaps less spectacularly so than its successor. For example, many European cathedrals still contain stained glass windows constructed during the Middle Ages. However, most art didn't serve primarily as objects of beauty to be admired. They were instead designed for edification or memorial.
- As a result, artists were craftsmen on par with other men of trade, possessing no special cultural designation or recognition. The most successful among them seem to have been astute businessmen, but they didn't possess great fortunes. Most weren't recognized as figures worthy of great admiration or adulation, as their Renaissance successors would be.

- The images of human figures these craftsmen produced tended to be representational rather than rendered from life. Realism wasn't the priority; the lesson of the piece was. Many artistic images existed to glorify Christian faith rather than to celebrate humanity.

Giotto

- The great exception to this late medieval picture was Giotto. Giotto trained in a workshop in Florence in the Byzantine style, a circumstance that gave him a connection to classicism and the realism associated with it. In his rendering, human figures appeared solid and rounded, rather than flat. They interacted with one another in realistic ways.
- One of Giotto's masterpieces exemplifies these innovations: the *Lamentation*, a fresco painted in a chapel in Padua. It's part of much larger series of 38 images depicting the lives of the Virgin Mary and Jesus.
- The *Lamentation* gives the viewer access to this most intimate of moments, as Christ's followers mourn his death and grieve over his body. From the clasped hands pressed to the cheek of one of the mourners to the outstretched arms of another, these are recognizably human reactions and gestures.



🌀 Giotto (1266–1337) 🌀

Realism

- Not until the early 15th century were Giotto's achievements in realism matched. Timing was important: The recovery of classical learning and values gained cultural traction, and humanism began to make its mark on the culture of the Italian states.
- The new learning suited the new approach to art that emphasized individualism and realism, taking inspiration from and modeling classical forms. Artists began to consider the examples of antiquity as worthy of imitation and adaptation to their own environment.
- Even though many of the greatest examples of Early Renaissance art were religious pieces, they joyfully displayed and celebrated the human form with an emotional resonance and depth lacking in their medieval counterparts. Renaissance painters used mathematical principles of perspective and the study of anatomy to give increased realism to their images.

Artistic Patronage

- Artists' innovations transformed the look and experience of Italian painting during the Early Renaissance. However, this was an age of patronage, and the taste of those who paid the bills still held powerful sway. Their fashion for subjects and styles and colors and media ultimately did much to determine the visual Renaissance.
- Art communicated powerful messages. Corporate patrons—guilds of armorers or stonemasons, for example—commissioned works to celebrate their trade, and to advertise their business. That's how they broadcast their skill and their power.
- Patronage during the Early Renaissance also saw civic institutions calling on artists to decorate public spaces to commemorate their power and values. Private patrons also subsidized artists; a relationship with a prominent and wealthy patron was the ultimate goal of most Renaissance artists. They painted to satisfy a customer and in hopes of securing the next commission.

- Artists worked on contracts, with prices and deadlines clearly stipulated and often with very specific instructions on the images to be created. Some of these agreements were incredibly detailed, even down to the individual pigments to be employed in the paintings.

Sandro Botticelli

- Many examples exist to attest to the productive energy that animated the system of Early Renaissance patronage. Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510) serves as a case study. Botticelli landed one of the greatest patrons of later 15th-century Florence: Lorenzo the Magnificent. Lorenzo's circle of artists prized innovation, and Botticelli responded with images influenced by classical antiquity and pagan mythology.
- *Primavera* celebrates the birth of spring, with the wood nymph Chloris being transformed into Flora by Zephyrus, the god of west wind, while the Three Graces dance nearby and the god Mercury stands poised to pluck the fruits of spring.
- Another example is Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi*, which blurs the line between past and present to commemorate the Medici as the leaders of the Florentine state. Cosimo de' Medici kneels before the Christ child, while Cosimo's two sons, Piero and Giovanni, complete the traditional trio of wise men. All three were dead at the time of the painting's creation in the 1470s.
- Lorenzo the Magnificent, whose patronage Botticelli was already beginning to enjoy, and his brother Giuliano are among the assembled onlookers in the painting. According to many, so is Botticelli himself, in the form of a confident young man gazing out of the frame on the far right. The artist was beginning to be a figure worthy of commemoration himself.

Suggested Reading

Dunlop, *Painted Palaces*.
O'Malley, *Painting under Pressure*.
Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 In what ways do you think painting during the Early Renaissance fits with the broader Renaissance quest for the good life?
- 2 What might have motivated Renaissance patrons to subsidize artists? Were the motivations different from their subsidizing of humanists?

LECTURE 12

Painting in the High Italian Renaissance



he Early Renaissance housed its fair share of brilliant artists. However, even their magnificent achievements were eclipsed by the leading figures of the High Renaissance, the title given to the fullest flowering of the visual Renaissance. That vibrant period, credited with a veritable artistic revolution in painting, is the focus of this lecture.

A Shift

- One of the factors that distinguishes the High from the Early Renaissance is a marked shift in the ways contemporaries viewed the work and personalities of artists themselves and then communicated those assessments to posterity. Previous assessments that put painters and other artists at the level of mere craftsmen were replaced by commentary extolling their mastery.
- Now, artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael rubbed shoulders with the rich and powerful. They became people of note themselves. Additionally, to supply the demand for Renaissance art, many artists were needed whose names don't immediately leap to mind. Yet their work, too, is part of the fabric of the Renaissance tapestry.
- Talent also gave female artists value and a position in society as well, often catering to same-sex patrons who supported their efforts. Artistic skill didn't make a woman invulnerable, though, to the challenges faced by other women during the Renaissance centuries.

Leonardo da Vinci

- This lecture will use the artist, architect, and engineer Leonardo da Vinci as its first case study. Despite his immense level of talent, many of Leonardo's patrons were destined to be disappointed by his level of commitment to their projects. Time and again, he was long on ideas but rather short on delivery, in part because his talents and interests were so many. He liked challenges but was always eager to move on to the next one.
- Regardless of Leonardo's failures to produce, his patrons weren't in short supply, in part because his talents as a painter were indisputable. His own master Verrochio was said to have given up painting when he realized how much his young apprentice's skills outshined his own.
- Leonardo's paintings were actually few in number, but they serve as highlights of the High Renaissance. For example, *The Last Supper of Christ*, the fresco for a monastery in Milan, was as revolutionary as the experimental paints Leonardo used. It was an experiment gone wrong:

Just a few years after its completion, the pigments began to break down. However, the work is undeniably arresting in its depiction of one of the most electrically charged moments in the Christian tradition.

- Other examples include his two famous portrait studies: *Lady with an Ermine* and the *Mona Lisa*. The enigmatic appeal of the latter seems infinite, so thoroughly has she been absorbed into the cultural landscape of the Western tradition.



Leonardo da Vinci's *Lady with an Ermine*

- The subject of the *Mona Lisa* seems in some ways to have become emblematic of the Renaissance itself. There's something appealing in her gaze that trumpets her uniqueness. She is also tinged with an air of mystery, which works well with a prominent theme of the Renaissance: the desire to uncover what is beyond the surface.

The Grind

- Even after the emergence of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael, plenty of less famous artists continued toiling away. They worked for different commissions and patrons, and their workshops cranked out plenty of somewhat mundane portraits and decorative paintings. This could be grueling work.
- Renaissance workshops were hives of activity, employing many people who hustled to meet deadlines or face the wrath of angry customers. Some of that activity wasn't glamorous, even for the master artist himself. In addition to serving as the lead talent, he also had to oversee such tasks as packaging paintings for delivery, their transportation and installation, and even their continued maintenance, should a piece become damaged.
- Carefully negotiated contracts between artists and patrons included minute details about every aspect of the production process. Subcontracting played a role as well: Shops might contract out gilding or woodwork, for example, to avoid having to supervise such projects in-house.

The Role of Female Artists

- The art scene in the Italian Renaissance was most definitely a commercial enterprise. It was also a largely male enterprise, at least on the side of production. However, women painters played an important role during the Italian Renaissance.

- They were often from families of artists, but others were self-taught, and these women had successful careers in part because they were women. They were able to trade on their novelty to secure commissions and to receive the patronage of other women.
- The writer Giorgio Vasari mentions just a handful of women in his *Lives of the Artists*. It's a testament to the skill of these women that he mentions any, given that Renaissance artists were so much a fraternal organization. He tends to focus on their virtue rather than their skill.

Specific Female Artists

- Vasari's account of Sofonisba Anguissola and her sisters is an example of his focus on virtue rather than instinctive talent of the sort to be found in male artists. Vasari is complimentary of the sisters' gifts, but his constant reminders of their being maidens seems a means of domesticating them by associating them with their womanliness.
- Sofonisba had a career many would have found enviable. Her early work, which often took the form of domestic scenes that featured herself and her sisters, gained considerable attention. It attracted the praise of Michelangelo, for example.
- Additional portraits found her future employment. After completing a painting of the Spanish duke of Alva, Sofonisba then acquired employment at the Spanish court. There, she served as a tutor and lady-in-waiting of Elisabeth of Valois, wife of Philip II (r. 1556–1598).
- Sofonisba was a trailblazer. There were women artists before, but many of those who followed her were inspired by her success and the reception of her work. One of them was Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1656), the first woman to receive admission into Florence's prestigious Academy of Fine Arts. Like her male counterparts, Gentileschi selected her subjects from the classical and biblical past, but unlike the men, she tended to focus on depictions of strong—and often wronged—women.
- The emotion behind some of these images of women was likely more than academic for Gentileschi. As a young woman, she'd been raped by

an apprentice of her father, and she became embroiled in the lengthy attempt to prosecute him for the crime.

- That gave her work an element of sensationalism for both contemporaries and for subsequent generations as well: Her personal life and troubles loomed larger than her artistic catalogue. That imbalance is beginning to be righted, as her paintings—including a powerful rendering of the Judith and Holofernes story and a striking self-portrait of the artist as a young woman—are heralded as indicators of a complex, creative artist, rather than simply curiosities.
- Scholars are increasingly shining light on the lives and projects of these women. The Emmy-winning program *Invisible Women: Forgotten Artists of Florence* and the book on which it was based are perhaps the most visible projects to recover the other side of the Italian artistic Renaissance.

Suggested Reading

Fortune, *Invisible Women*.
Isaacson, *Leonardo da Vinci*.
Johnson, *Renaissance Art*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What factors do you think explain the celebrity status of Renaissance artists, then and now? Do we find them so compelling because of how different they seem from us, or because of how similar or modern they appear?
- 2 Why do think the vision of the world created by the artists of the Italian Renaissance continues to serve as an artistic standard today?

LECTURE 13

Italian Sculpture, Architecture, and Music



uring the Renaissance, a clear pattern emerged of Italian civic leaders striving to present their states as works of art. Civic environments were carefully planned to communicate the fruits of their designers' study of classical texts on proportion and space and to order the world in an aesthetically and functionally pleasing way. This lecture takes a look at the work of sculptors and architects during the Italian Renaissance, and also spends some time on music makers.

Civic Spaces

- In public civic spaces in Renaissance Italy, messages of citizens and patrons and artists intersected in monuments of stone, bronze, marble, and brick. These were the places in which civic identity and pride were both imagined and reinforced.
- For example, in Piazza San Marco, Venetians saw the statue of the tetrarchs, relocated from a humbled Constantinople in the wake of the Fourth Crusade. The intertwined figures were designed to memorialize the ancient leadership of the Roman Empire, and the piece served as a sign of the contemporary Venice's maritime and commercial dominance over the former Mediterranean leader.
- During the Renaissance, such public pieces spoke volumes about the ways magistrates and despots wished to create and impart identity for themselves and their states. However, the narratives patrons and planners provided were as unstable as many of the Italian city-states themselves.
- Take, for example, Florence's magnificent sculpture *David*, freed from a massive block of Carrara marble by Michelangelo. David was a popular Renaissance subject. The Old Testament shepherd-turned-king catapulted to fame thanks to his victory in the showdown with mighty Philistine warrior Goliath.

Multiple Renderings of David

- Michelangelo wasn't the only person to sculpt David. The Florentine government rewarded Donatello's marble *David* with a spot in the Piazza della Signoria. The great Florentine square played host to the most important of the state's civic institutions. As fitting this location, the marble *David* was provided an inscription reading, in translation, "To those struggling courageously for the fatherland, God grants help even against the most terrible enemies."
- Just a handful of years before, Florence had itself been granted aid against a most terrible enemy when Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351–1402) of Milan died of plague before he could defeat the republic. The right-

triumphing-over-might lesson communicated by *David*, coupled with the statue's placement in the Piazza della Signoria, made the piece an appropriate civic guardian for the virtuous republic.

- In addition to the marble one, Donatello also made a bronze *David*, which was likely commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464) for display in the family's palazzo. It was made during the period when the integrity of the Florentine republic, having staved off another challenge from Milan in the 1420s, was being compromised by Cosimo's growing influence.
- This *David*, too, would wind up featured in the Florentine square. It was relocated to join its creator's marble version in the Piazza della Signoria after the expulsion of the Medici from Florence in 1494. Like the state itself, such pieces would be liberated from Medici domination.
- In the wake of the reestablishment of the republic, the magistrates would again turn to the image of David to dominate this public showplace of Florentine values. The honor of exemplifying the republic went to Michelangelo's massive marble version. Today, the original is housing in the Uffizi Gallery. Replicas also reside in the piazza and high atop the hill overlooking the city.

Architecture

- Renaissance artists and patrons used the past to inform and understand their present, a circumstance that imbued public objects and space with tremendous ideological and practical power. An example is the work of Italian architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446), who discovered the laws of perspective and applied them in his designs.
- The most famous of Brunelleschi's projects came after he'd returned to Florence from time in Rome. The task Brunelleschi took up was a significant public as well as spiritual concern: the completion of Florence's cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore.

- The large space of the center of the cathedral was still exposed to the elements in the early 15th century, no architect capable of enclosing it due to the massive weight a dome for the space would have required. Brunelleschi's proposed strategy was as innovative as it was impressive—and it was inspired by the ancients.
- Brunelleschi designed a huge dome for the cathedral, the largest built since the days of old Rome's construction of the Pantheon. It cleverly utilized ribbed vaulting, an inner and outer shell, and other techniques that displace some of its weight. Its magnificence dominated the Florentine horizon and became a source of pride to its residents.
- The dome of Santa Maria represented the intersection of faith, civic imperatives and identity, and classicism that would become a feature of the Renaissance environment. The interplay of these dynamic Renaissance design forces was also on particular display in Rome, where Julius II (r. 1503–1513) launched several projects as a patron.
- Among the spaces whose decoration Julius oversaw were the Sistine Chapel and the papal apartments in the Vatican Palace. He also oversaw the laying of the foundation stone for the new St. Peter's Basilica in 1506, among other activities.



Music

- Keep in mind that artists and architects, while creative, were often restricted by the stipulations of their patrons. That means the unfettered creativity often associated with the Italian Renaissance can most prominently be found in its music.
- A sizable number of classical treatises on musical theory were in circulation, but these pieces emphasized theory rather than practice. The ancients had explored the rules of harmony and extolled the virtues of music, in the form of the grand celestial symphony that ordered the universe. It was those commentaries they left for future generations.
- Lost, however, were the actual musical sounds of the ancient world. Examples of ancient music were no longer extant for Renaissance musicians to consult. However, because examples of classical music hadn't survived antiquity, there was much more freedom for Renaissance musicians to explore and create.
- Fifteenth-century music's forms and functions in the Italian states exemplified many characteristics of the Renaissance. Religious spaces were filled with voices, singing the divine service. The proportions of great cathedrals were devised with sensitivity to the sound of voices in enclosed spaces.
- An emphasis on secular themes and settings also helped move music out of the religious sphere and into the environment of the princely courts. Music was an important component of the soundscape of courtly life. Professional musicians found employment in these settings, and music became increasingly regularized, thanks in part to the growing popularity and expansion of print.
- In this atmosphere of increasing professionalism, there was also plenty of room for the amateur singer and instrumentalist. The cultivated Italian courtier was expected to be able to number musical proficiency among his achievements.

- The subject of music comes up in Castiglione's conduct manual *The Courtier*. The participants of Castiglione's imagined dialogue debate the merits of music, with the foil Gasparo Pallavicino suggesting that music was effeminate—perhaps suitable for women, but not men.
- The rest of the company takes the opposite tack, in defense of music. Ludovico da Canossa, for example, claims the courtier's knowledge must be both theoretical and practical. His defense of music draws on classical exemplars, even reminding his listeners that Socrates himself took up a stringed instrument known as the cithern as an old man.
- In sum, music was a monument of sound. It evoked the desired values of the ancients even as it allowed its practitioners and hearers to enjoy and ornament the present.

Suggested Reading

Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*.

King, *Brunelleschi's Dome*.

Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Have you visited any the monuments mentioned in this lecture? What messages did they communicate to you about the Renaissance?
- 2 Do you think other forms of communication replaced physical monuments as means by which states disseminate messages and comment on their values?

LECTURE 14

Letters in the Italian Renaissance



his lecture examines the lives and careers of a trio of Renaissance authors who used their words to help write the Renaissance into the pages of history. The Renaissance can be seen as a product of a particularly successful public relations campaign: It was an age of wonders, genius, gold, and grace, in no small part because contemporaries said so—and then left their assessments to posterity. Scholars can't accept these articulations of the Renaissance at face value, but they can study them to think about the ways in which Renaissance writers described their world. That's the goal of this lecture.

Francesco Datini

- The correspondence of merchant Francesco Datini (1335–1410) offers one glimpse of the world of letters that helped mark 14th-century Italy as a culture on the cusp of becoming expansively literate. Datini's early life was shaped by the devastations of the Black Death, which claimed the lives of three of his siblings, his mother, and his father, a merchant member of the guild of tavern keepers in the city of Prato.
- After a period of apprenticeship in Florence, young Datini moved in 1350 to Avignon, then serving as the seat of the papacy at the height of the so-called Avignon Exile. Datini also acquired in Prato the property that would develop into his primary residence, the Palazzo Datini.
- During this early period of Datini's career, he formed valuable relationships with men of trade in Avignon, Florence, and Prato, and he acquired wealth and a sound reputation as a purveyor of arms, art, and other luxury goods. He also acquired in 1376 his life partner and wife, Margherita Bandini.
- Datini went on to win significant prestige in Prato and a sizable fortune: His estate was valued at 100,000 florins at the time of his death in 1410. Scholars know much about his life thanks to some 150,000 letters found under a staircase in his home in the late 19th century. They are mostly comprised of business correspondences.
- The reach of Datini's commercial network is amply demonstrated by the variety of languages featured in the letters, ranging from the local Tuscan and other Italian dialects to Latin, Catalan, Castilian, Arabic, Provençal, and Hebrew.
- These letters indicate that Datini, and others of his status group of ambitious merchants and men of commerce, considered letter writing an essential tool to support their success. Datini and other merchants considered it important to record their business transactions and directives as well as their personal thoughts.

- There's a sense in these materials that the writers considered their activities, personal and commercial, worthy of recording. For example, the long and sometimes turbulent marriage between Francesco and Margherita is charted by this correspondence, and the letters between husband and wife are also remarkable in their liveliness in expressing the couple's affection and frustrations. Datini knew his own mind and how to formulate his thoughts on the page.

Giorgio Vasari

- The next writer this lecture turns to is the artist and biographer Giorgio Vasari. He was born in Arezzo, but his artistic career would soon take him to Rome and Florence. He was often in the employment of the Medici, who exercised authority in the early 1530s over both Florence and the papacy.
- Vasari was a successful painter, working on frescoes for the Roman chancery and the town hall in Florence, among other projects. Vasari achieved prominence as an architect as well. He was commissioned to complete projects involving public works and urban planning, the renovation of medieval churches, and a property of Pope Julius III (r. 1550–1555) on the outskirts of Rome.
- Vasari's most substantial contribution to the Renaissance is *The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, first published in 1550. It was intended to recount the events of great lives and to inspire others. Vasari's work also offers an insider's view of the patronage scene that drove the art production market, particularly in Florence.



🌀 Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) 🌀

- Vasari offers a chilling assessment of the struggles artists faced to thrive in an environment that commodified art and its producers: “Florence treats her craftsmen as time treats its own works, which, when perfected, it destroys and consumes little by little.”
- However, Vasari’s *Lives* also offers lively, splashy accounts of artists’ activities. In his biography of Raphael, for example, Vasari dishes on an incident of “artistic espionage.” Following a showdown between Michelangelo and Pope Julius II over the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo fled Florence. The famous architect of St. Peter’s Basilica, Bramante, had the keys to the chapel. Bramante gave his friend Raphael special access, “to the end that he might be able to learn the methods of Michelangelo.”
- Raphael was profoundly inspired by what he saw, immediately repainting one of his own recently completed pieces. This revision, Vasari comments, “made the manner immeasurably better and more grand, and gave it great majesty.” In an artistic environment that thrived on competition, Bramante and Raphael’s actions were tantamount to professional betrayal.
- Above everything else, Vasari’s great encyclopedia of artists’ biographies celebrates his own predecessors and contemporaries. He identifies them as men whose skills make the details of their lives worth knowing. For example, take this sentence from the opening of his biography of Leonardo da Vinci:

In him was great bodily strength, joined to dexterity, with a spirit and courage ever royal and magnanimous; and the fame of his name so increased, that not only in his lifetime was he held in esteem, but his reputation became even greater among posterity after his death.

- The talents of the Renaissance artists made them geniuses, but it was Vasari’s words that made them celebrities. Vasari’s descriptions of the works and lives of artists made them larger than life, and for his contemporaries, made them living legends.

Francesco Guicciardini

- Another author in the employ of the Medici, at least for a time, was Florentine historian Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540). Guicciardini's efforts changed the field of history itself. His training was extensive, covering languages, classics, and the law.
- He entered the service of the restored Florentine republic during a period in which Medici hegemony was on hiatus. He taught law to Florentine students at the request of the republican magistrates. He also traveled to the court of Ferdinand of Aragon (r. 1475–1504) in 1512 as an ambassador.
- During his absence, the Medici returned to Florence. When Guicciardini himself traveled to his native city, he found his opportunities had expanded to include papal service as well, now that the Medici controlled the throne of St. Peter. The Medici popes Leo X (r. 1513–1521) and Clement VII (r. 1523–1534) relied on Guicciardini's talents in statecraft.
- The brief resurgence of the Florentine republic in 1527 saw Guicciardini tarred with the Medici brush as a traitor to the state, but his political exile was short lived. He returned to the position of trusted advisor. This time, he served Duke Alessandro de' Medici. Following Alessandro's assassination in 1537, Guicciardini served Cosimo I de' Medici before the young grand duke dismissed him from service.
- Guicciardini personally favored a greater degree of shared elite governance for Florence, and his writings didn't shy away from chastising the personal and political flaws of the Medici. That tension, between political ideals and realities, animated his writing during his years in retirement. It was his attempt to make sense of the events of his own times in his *History of Italy* that revealed him as one of the most astute writers of the Italian Renaissance.
- Guicciardini opens his *History* with the Medici troubles of the 1490s and the invasion of Charles VIII of France in 1494, and records his insights on the turbulent decades that followed. He offers an insider's perspective on the events he catalogues.

- Guicciardini excelled in his consideration of causation and context. He put history into the hands of great men, but he sought to explore their motivations in both his *History of Italy* and his *History of Florence*. For example, his description of Lorenzo de' Medici in the *History of Florence* reveals care in understanding context and political circumstances.
- He was a master at setting the scene, describing a city in “a state of perfect peace” that was “sustained both by its abundant supplies and its flourishing and well-established business enterprises.” However, the death of Lorenzo “turned everything upside down.” The Florentine’s assessment speaks to his understanding of the powerful intersection of past, present, and future over which historians preside.

Suggested Reading

Mayer and Woolf, eds., *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe*.
Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 How does thinking about written accounts from the Renaissance as the product of self-fashioning by their authors problematize the information presented?
- 2 What does the project of writing as a means of self-expression suggest to you about the culture of Italian Renaissance and how it differed from its medieval predecessor? Why and how did the written word come to have so much power?

LECTURE 15

Renaissance Statecraft: A New Path

his lecture turns its attention to the feudal kingdoms of the Late Middle Ages to provide an understanding of what the lands north of the Alps were like at the beginning of the Italian Renaissance. This section of the course marks a new geographic focus, and that shift has embedded itself in the nomenclature of this part of European history: It's referred to as the Northern Renaissance. It involved educational reform and a renewed interest in classical learning, humanism, and artistic innovation. The period also saw the cultural fruits of the movement of peoples: Italians to the north and northerners to Italy.

Northern Changes

- When the authority of ancient Rome unraveled in the north, its former dominions found their way into the hands of peoples known to history as the barbarians. These were groups of nomadic raiders, many of whom were put on the move by the greatest barbarian of them all: Attila the Hun (d. 453).
- These barbarians saw their world very differently from the Romans, at least in the beginning. They didn't have empires or emperors. Instead, tribal and clan organization was supreme.



- The barbarians moved in search of increased safety, increased opportunity, and other complex reasons. Some settled in Roman lands at Rome's invitation. The empire got into a dangerous game of playing various tribes against one another. That strategy sometimes offered short-term gains, but more often resulted in disaster. For example, a disgruntled barbarian coalition defeated the Romans in 378 at the Battle of Adrianople, and the Visigoths sacked Rome in 410.
- However, some barbarians saw the advantage of joining Rome and became Latinized. They settled in Roman lands and served in the Roman army.
- The most significant cultural gap was religious: The barbarians were pagans. In the west, Christian Rome lost its struggle for supremacy in the 5th century to the pagans. Rome to the east simply went on expanding and contracting down to 1453. This was Byzantium.

Cultural Changes and Preservation

- The Renaissance humanists may have deplored the coming of the barbarians as initiating the loss of all things Roman, but the barbarians actually preserved a number of key features of the classical world. For example, they settled down in fixed geographic locations and built kingdoms.
- The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes went to the British Isles, where they overwhelmed the Romano-Brit populations and formed Anglo-Saxon England. The Visigoths ended up in Iberia, and the Franks went to the northern part of modern France; from there, they pushed outward to the south and east.
- In central Europe and Scandinavia, a number of tribes settled and jockeyed for power. These tribes also came to embrace Christianity at varying speeds. For example, the Visigothic state in Iberia embraced Christianity but subsequently lost power. The author of its undoing was a newly emergent faith from Arabia: Islam.

The Arrival of Islam

- The 1st-century of Islam was eventful for the fledgling Christian areas. Within a century of Muhammad's death, significant portions of the Mediterranean were lost, including the Vandal kingdom in North Africa and the Visigothic kingdom in Iberia.
- The Muslims even sent a raiding party toward the heart of Christian Europe. Its advance was halted by a Frankish force under the leadership of Charles Martel. The 732 Battle of Tours helped set in motion a couple of massive shifts in the development of the Western world.
- First, the dynasty of Clovis was finished: The ruling Merovingians were seen to have outlived their usefulness as leaders. It was an impression aided, if not actually constructed, by their successors, the family of Charles Martel, known as the Carolingians.
- Second, that Carolingian usurpation helped cement an important relationship between Frankish kings and the bishop of Rome. The papacy recognized the dynasty of Charles's son Pepin (r. 751-758), and in return, the Franks assisted the papacy with a host of problems on the Italian Peninsula, particularly involving a rambunctious barbarian tribe, the Lombards. In 756, the Donation of Pepin made the pope a secular prince, with the gift of what become known as the Papal States.
- The relationship between papacy and Frankish monarchy was enhanced further during the rule of the greatest Carolingian of them all: Charlemagne (r. 768-814). Despite later protestations, Charlemagne found himself crowned king of the Romans at the instigation of Pope Leo III on Christmas Day in the year 800.

The Vikings

- There would soon be far more pressing matters to tend to: a new, pagan menace, rising from the north in the form of the Vikings. The Frankish kingdom, which had grown under Charlemagne to incorporate much of modern France and a portion of modern Germany, descended into royal and aristocratic squabbling.

- The squabbling was driven primarily by the tendency of the formerly barbarian tribes to elect their leaders and to practice partible inheritance (the practice of giving all heirs a piece of the patrimony). Partible inheritance sound equitable, but the division of holdings generation after generation reduced any pretensions of central authority.
- By the 9th century, the Vikings had Christian Europe in a vice. In addition to the Vikings, the Muslims were active in the Mediterranean, and a new pagan menace, the Magyars, were driving in from the east. Christendom had no real champion. The decentralized holdings of nobles offered little resistance in the face of such significant threats.

Feudalism

- In response to the troubles, one of the key organizing principles of the medieval period was born: feudalism. This was a relationship of mutual obligation among elites involving the granting of land in return for military service. Lords offered protection to their vassals, to whom they gave land (fiefs). Vassals, in return, pledged loyalty to their lords. This system helped stabilize the lands long enough for the Vikings and the Magyars to be somewhat pacified through conversion.
- Feudalism was predicated on intensely personal relationships. Those feudal relations could establish and sustain order on a small scale. The trouble was extending authority beyond the local.
- That brings up the primary political arrangement that dominated the north in the period leading up to the Renaissance: feudal monarchy. Powerful lords sought more power, but the more power they gained, the more distant they were from those over whom they theoretically had power.
- The distance was caused by a practice known as subinfeudation. In essence, vassals began parceling out land to trusted subvassals. Subvassals sometimes ran into questions of loyalty; for instance, the situation would be complicated if subvassal were simultaneously pledged to two vassals who went to war with one another.

A Complicated Picture

- Kings at the top of this complicated chain had quite a challenge in ensuring loyalty. Feudal monarchy, as a general rule, trended toward weakness. A survey of the three medieval kingdoms of England, France, and the German Holy Roman Empire—all formed during the 10th and 11th centuries—demonstrates a handful of persistent troubles that undermined the acquisition of authority.
- First, royal succession presented problems. For example, in England, kings tended to have too few sons—or too many. In the empire, there was the matter of imperial election—that is, the notion that the German aristocrats selected their kings. That would eventually solidify in the 13th century into a particular formula, where seven imperial electors determined the emperor.
- France alone had success in the heirs department. The house of French king Hugh Capet (r. 987–996) had remarkable staying power. For almost 350 years, Capetian queens produced male heirs (or were put aside so that the business of procreation could be completed successfully).

Noble Problems

- The second complicating factor was the nobility. Like the kings and like the clerical leadership, nobles fancied themselves natural leaders, and they liked their autonomy. French nobles picked Hugh Capet, for example, because they thought he'd leave them alone. They chose poorly. The Capetian kings would spend much of the Middle Ages slowly taking land and authority away from the nobles through a series of marriages, wars, and negotiations.
- In England, the royal family itself grew massive, thanks to the enthusiastic activities of Edward III (r. 1327–1377). Competing branches of the royal family tree gave the ruling monarchs fits.
- In the empire, the German dukes, too, liked their authority. The failure of the Saxon and Franconian dynasties to produce heirs allowed the dukes to meddle in imperial politics because they persisted in exercising their authority to elect emperors.

Foreign Entanglements

- A third issue was foreign entanglements. Holy Roman emperors wished they were lords of Italy. English kings wished to rule France. French kings wanted more power in their own lands, but were less distracted by other lands.
- For the English and German monarchs, dreams of greatness abroad often led to compromise or rebellion at home. Take, for example, John of England (r. 1199–1216), who thirsted for French glory. His legendary incompetence led his frustrated nobles to engineer a contract known as Magna Carta to safeguard their rights and curb the abuses of the king.
- The Germans' desire for greatness in Italy is directly related to the fourth issue facing medieval monarchs: how to get along with the papacy. That was another ingredient into the recipe of feudal monarchy trending toward weak authority.

New Monarchies

- Changes were coming in the form of what are known as the New Monarchies. The goal was simple: Kings wanted to be boss in their own lands. The emperors kept mucking about in Italy, but in the 15th century, England gave up the ghost with regard to a combined Anglo-French monarchy. It allowed them to concentrate on internal control.
- Their efforts focused on weakening the aristocrats through threats of financial penalty, legal restrictions, and reduction of their independent military strength. Another focus was on protecting borders and ensuring the loyalty of people residing within said borders.
- The sense of the state was aided by the formation of new, self-conscious national identities, supported by the rise of the vernacular literary tradition and other cultural factors. All in all, this approach heralded the coming of the nation-state: a new political entity shaped by a singular power but influenced by a growing recognition of the diversity of peoples in Europe.

Suggested Reading

Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan*.

O'Meara, *Monarchy and Consent*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Which individuals and developments do you identify with the Northern Renaissance, and what is your understanding of the key differences between the Italian and Northern Renaissance?
- 2 What do you think distinguished the Italian city-states from their northern contemporaries at the start of the Italian Renaissance?

LECTURE 16

European Renaissance Monarchies



his lecture focuses on the rivalries north of the Alps. It's common to hear about the Italians as having created modern politics during the Renaissance, but it's important to recognize the developments of the northern states as changing the course of Western political development as well. The lecture begins on the Iberian Peninsula and moves on to other areas, including France, England, and the Holy Roman Empire.

The Iberian Peninsula

- The medieval history of Iberia was appreciably distinct from that of its neighbors in Christendom. That's because for nearly 800 years, the peninsula was ground zero of a holy war between Christians and Muslims. It all began when the Christian Visigothic kingdom gave way in 711 in the face of the first explosive period of Islamic expansion.
- The Muslims enjoyed many victories during Islam's first century, but the unity of their new empire didn't long survive: By 750, the first dynasty had fallen and been replaced in the east. The Iberian lands of the west, however, served as a stronghold of the remnants of the fallen dynasty, in the form of the caliphate of Córdoba.
- The presence of a Muslim state in the west was both a practical and an ideological threat to the newly Christian kingdoms nearby and to the Christians on the peninsula who wanted their lands returned to their own governance and faith. The subsequent process was the Reconquista, a centuries-long recapturing of Iberian lands by Christian leaders.



- Christian success came in fits and starts. Nevertheless, during the course of the Middle Ages, the Muslims' zone of control was slowly reduced as they were driven down the peninsula. As the Christians gained land, they created a number of new kingdoms, the most powerful of which were Castile and Aragon. Portugal gained its independence, as did Navarre. By the 13th century, only the southern portion of the peninsula, Granada, remained under Muslim domination.

Isabella and Ferdinand

- The Iberian kingdoms shared many features, but they were not unified. However, the middle of the 15th century saw the formation of a Spanish power alliance. The partners were Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. The former was the heiress of the greatest of the Spanish kingdoms, and the latter controlled Naples and nearby Sicily as well as other Mediterranean islands in addition to Aragon.
- Their marriage in 1469 brought a significant degree of unity to the Spanish kingdoms, although it's still anachronistic to speak of a singular Spain in this period. The various kingdoms retained, among other things, their own legal and legislative customs as well as separate systems of taxation.
- Aside from their famous patronage of Genoese explorer Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand and Isabella's largest impact came courtesy of their religious policies. They oversaw the final stage of the Reconquista: In 1492, the final Muslim stronghold of Granada fell. The same year saw Ferdinand and Isabella expel approximately 200,000 Jews from the Spanish lands as well, ordering the Jews to leave their wealth behind.
- The drive for religious purity was in fact a key feature of Spanish policy under Ferdinand and Isabella. Worried that Jews who'd converted to Christianity secretly remained loyal to their former religion, the Spanish pair sought and received permission from Pope Sixtus IV to establish the Inquisition in their lands in the early 1480s. This worry extended to recently converted Muslims as well—the Moriscos.

- The Inquisition created an atmosphere of fear and suspicion, where neighbor reported on neighbor. Officials could wield their considerable authority for personal gain. It gave an element of militancy to Spanish faith long after the *Reconquista* was over.
- A later momentous event for all of Europe was the death of Ferdinand in 1516. The inheritor of the Spanish kingdoms was the same young man who would also rule the Low Countries, already a prosperous northern trading center, and the Habsburg lands of Central Europe. He was Charles I of Spain, who was shortly elected holy Roman emperor.

England

- England's 15th century had also been a tumultuous one. The early years featured an aristocratic usurpation. The trouble over the crown stemmed in no small part from the robustness of Edward III's family tree. Although Edward's medieval predecessors had sometimes struggled to provide male heirs, he didn't suffer that particular problem.
- His most capable heir, Edward, died before his father, leaving behind him an imperious, unpopular son who ruled as Richard II (r. 1377–1399). Resistance to Richard's reign led to the ascension of Henry Bolingbroke. He ruled as Henry IV from 1399 to 1413.
- This rupture to the line of succession would have disastrous ramifications throughout the century that followed, igniting a series of conflicts as various branches of the royal family fought for supremacy. It hadn't appeared that would be the case in the 1410s, when Henry IV's son and namesake became England's king.
- Henry V (r. 1413–1422) seemed to be putting England on a path to its greatest destiny: His resumption of the Hundred Years' War with France saw England's stunning upset victory at Agincourt in 1415 and set the stage for the unification of the crowns of England and France. Henry V's early death of dysentery, however, left his infant son to rule as Henry VI (r. 1422–1461 and 1470–1471). English victory was not to be.

- The unraveling of England's cause was the result of many factors, not least of which was the charismatic Joan of Arc, whose visions and valor turned the tide. The final battle in the long conflict came in 1453, with England's holdings in France slashed and its identity forever changed. War with France, though, would quickly be replaced by civil conflict.

Civil Conflict in England

- England's loss of continental territories and Henry VI's incompetence rankled the English aristocrats. One of them was Richard, duke of York. He was himself a grandson of Edward III, and he drew on his heritage and extensive holdings to position himself as the leader of England.
- The ascendancy of the House of York at the expense of the king and the House of Lancaster initiated the Wars of the Roses, a three-decade-long conflict that locked English aristocrats in mortal combat. Richard, duke of York, never achieved his bid for the crown, but two of his sons would rule England.
- The first, Edward IV (r. 1460–1470 and 1471–1483), demonstrated tremendous promise. He seemed poised, with the birth of two sons, to bequeath England with a dynasty strong enough to forestall challenges.
- However, Edward's final years saw the king lose his vigor and descend into dissolute self-indulgence. He died young, leaving behind the royal siblings. They disappeared under the guardianship and protection of their uncle, a man who is often dubbed the most evil king in English history: Richard III (r. 1483–1485).
- It's uncertain exactly what role Richard had in the disappearance of his nephews. However, it's easier to gauge Richard's failure to secure the crown from the ambitions of a distant Lancastrian claimant, Henry Tudor (r. 1485–1509). Richard was killed in a clash between his army and Henry's in 1485.

Henry VII

- Henry Tudor, now reigning as Henry VII, had a tall order in front of him. Henry's problems were many, and his solutions were a mixture of innovation and tradition. To secure his throne from other claimants, Henry put the nobles on lockdown. The Court of Star Chamber—so named for the stars on the ceiling of its meeting room in Westminster—cracked down on aristocratic shows of defiance of the new king and his rule. It demanded obedience and punished dissent with crushing financial penalties.
- For a man who'd come to power by war, Henry was cautious in his foreign policy. Peace was more profitable than war, so Henry built bridges with fellow powers.
- Another element of Henry's strategy to stabilize his authority involved marriage. He took as his bride Elizabeth of York, one of the daughters of Edward IV and sister of the two missing princes, whose absence became permanent. Four Tudor children survived into their teenage years, and each was matched with a rival power.
- Henry VII created other powerful legacies that would shape the Tudor century. He preferred a small privy council of professional men to the older *curia regis* comprised of nobles. Henry avoided Parliament when he could, but he and his councilors expanded the reach of royal governance and curtailed autonomy where it existed.
- The civil court system grew, as did the administrative scope of the Justices of the Peace, local, amateur governors who enforced peace and good order throughout the realm. When he died in 1509, Henry VII left behind a stable, orderly, pacified England—and a full royal treasury.

France

- France was the greatest beneficiary of England's 15th-century unraveling; as England's cause in the Hundred Years' War waned, it was France's that waxed. After disastrous defeats at the hands of Henry V and his winning of the concession from Charles VI that the French crown would pass to Henry and his successors, France recovered.

- The man Joan of Arc helped make king, Charles VII (r. 1422–1461), may have struggled initially to secure his throne. However, once in power, he set about righting his ship of state. To his advantage was a French taxation system that privileged the king's ability to prosecute war. The representative body that emerged in medieval France, the Estates General, guaranteed the monarchs certain exactions.
- Charles developed a permanent royal army, the first of its kind in the region. He also gained useful concessions from the pope that helped nationalize the selection of clerical officials. Royal power also expanded at the expense of the aristocracy: One of the great medieval French royal projects was the expansion of the monarchs' control beyond the Ile de Paris, the traditional hereditary domain of the Capetian kings.

The Holy Roman Empire

- The German-speaking lands known as the Holy Roman Empire didn't have a great track record for monarchical strength. Because of problems with dynastic succession, rambunctious nobility, a longstanding rivalry with the papacy, and dreams of Italy, the medieval emperors tended to be weak kings.
- While there was an expectation that heredity would play a significant role in succession, the empire retained the practice of electing their leaders, which was common among the barbarians who settled those lands during late antiquity. In the empire, seven electors enjoyed the power of selecting the next monarch.
- The archbishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne cast votes in the imperial election, as did the elector of Saxony, the margrave of Brandenburg, the count of the Palatinate, and the king of Bohemia. However, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V was ruler of more than the Empire.
- He inherited the Spanish lands and the Low Countries as well as the Aragonese Mediterranean holdings. Overseas, his captains were establishing what would become a vast and lucrative empire in the Americas.

Suggested Reading

Major, *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy*.
Mulgan, *The Renaissance Monarchies*.
Zmora, *Monarchy, Aristocracy, and the State in Europe*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What role do you think internal 15th-century challenges played in shaping the northern monarchs' quest for power during the subsequent century? What weaknesses or crises were they seeking to address?
- 2 What major differences in statecraft and policymaking do you see between the Italian states and the northern monarchies surveyed here? How different was government in action in these areas?

LECTURE 17

The Birth of the Christian Renaissance



his lecture focuses on the cultural and intellectual developments of the Northern Renaissance (also known as the Christian Renaissance). The lecture starts by exploring the initiation of the northern rebirth, focusing on the texts and methods that led to a cultural awakening. It also introduces some of the prominent northern humanists as well as the ideas and ideals that animated on their commentary.

Modern Devotion

- In the northern Europe of the Late Middle Ages, many Christians embarked on a quest to enhance their faith in ways that emphasized individual piety rather than collective obedience. The quest for a good, pious life in challenging times led to the proliferation of new expressions of spiritual commitment.
- The opportunity to embrace a life of penitential observance without the abjuration of the material world and family was offered by the tertiary orders attached to the Dominicans and Franciscans. This was a powerful outlet for those seeking greater spiritual engagement. The confraternal movement, popular in Italy and elsewhere, was linked to tertiary orders and emphasized piety and charity.
- However, an alternate path came through the teachings of Gerard Groote (1340–1384), a lawyer-turned-Carthusian-monk who failed to find the spiritual satisfaction he sought within the confines of the monastery. He embarked on a faith quest, leaving the cloister behind him and pioneering what came to be known as the *Devotio Moderna* (the Modern Devotion).
- Groote's teachings emphasized the value of simplicity, contemplation, and the study of religious texts. It promoted an inward piety that avoided the ritual and the habitual in favor of the active pursuit of personal spiritual development, and it had great appeal for both men and women.
- The most famous practitioner of the Modern Devotion was Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471). His *De Imitatione Christi*, a text depicting the author's journey toward a more intimate relationship with God, was profoundly influential and is still one of the most popular works of Christian devotional literature.

The Movement Grows

- The surge in lay piety acted as the stimulus for a new kind of educational commitment that helped build a foundation for the Northern Renaissance. Groote's popular vision of piety involved education; the inward meditation on texts, particularly the Bible, required of a good Christian demanded it.
- The Modern Devotion gained adherents in the most urbanized area of Europe outside of Italy—that is, the northwest corner known as the Low Countries. Those who followed Groote's instructional model called themselves the Brethren of the Common Life. They devoted themselves to their piety and lived in common, free of the distractions and divisiveness of private possessions.
- The movement, which thrived between the 14th and 16th centuries, created some of the finest schools in northern Europe. One of their students was the man dubbed the prince of humanists: Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536).

Erasmus

- Erasmus captured the inquisitive, questioning, and critical spirit associated with the Italian Renaissance in his work. After his early education, he was ordained a priest. A well-traveled man, he found inspiration and edification in the Greek and Latin classics.
- He wrote an educational treatise dedicated to Emperor Charles V and took up war and international policies among his many themes, but on the whole, he was less interested than those in the south in the power of the classics to provide a foundation for the contemporary revival of ancient political values and forms.
- Erasmus believed that ancient scholarship had an even higher purpose than political concerns: It could be used to prompt a moral revival. Erasmus's time in Venice in the early 16th century offers one example of his efforts. Since the fledgling efforts of print pioneer Johannes Gutenberg in the 15th century, printing had become big business.



Erasmus (1466–1536)

- By 1500, roughly 1,000 print shops dotted the map of Europe. These shops had produced an astounding 20 million copies of books during the second half of the 15th century. That was a figure dwarfed by the estimated 150–200 million copies produced during the next century.

- Erasmus spent time during his sojourn in Venice in the shop of one of the most influential printers of all: Aldus Manutius (1449–1515), who had a humanist education himself. His workshop was more than a place of business; it was a vibrant community of scholars and craftsmen whose energies and efforts were altering the cultural and intellectual landscape of Europe.
- Erasmus published two of his key texts with Manutius. Those were 1500's *Adages*, a text of sayings culled from his comprehensive review of classical literature, and 1512's *De copia*, a Latin manual of style and exempla.
- The highly influential text published between the two, *Enchiridion militis christiani* (*The Handbook of the Christian Knight/Soldier*), gives a taste of Erasmus's ideas about Christian living. It required diligence and vigilance: The good Christian was akin to a knight, not in the sense of external militancy but in terms of internal discipline. Erasmus called for a Christian rebirth repeatedly in his impressive collection of writings.

Beyond Matters of Faith

- Northern humanists expanded the horizons of their scholarship beyond matters of faith. German humanism, for example, has an identifiably proto-national bent to it. Conrad Celtis saw cultural development as a contest. He pitted Germans against Italians for supremacy, exhorting them to take up the legacy of the barbarians who'd terrorized Rome, this time to inflict intellectual victories.
- Perhaps the most famous humanist public servant was England's Thomas More, chancellor during part of the reign of Henry VIII. More engaged in contemporary debates about law, order, justice, and good governance, topics that found a particularly lively, imaginative expression in his *Utopia*.

- *Utopia* is a complex combination of fanciful fiction and political philosophy that manages to speak to a particular historical moment and to remain timeless. Its account of an island people somewhere in the New World and yet nowhere, per the title, stands nearly every contemporary social, economic, and political convention on its head.
- There's no private property, and the Utopians live communally in well-ordered dwellings, distributed to ensure the proper ratio of people to resources. Greed is unknown. Universal healthcare is provided, and a plurality of worship practices is tolerated.
- The opening outlines many of contemporary England's ills. Many of these would have resonated with a wider European readership, particularly narrator Raphael Hythloday's commentary on crime and punishment. More's text also rails against the agricultural practice of fencing off land previously reserved for common use to create more pasture by those who sought to enrich themselves and impoverish others in the process.
- More was not alone in his advocacy for greater attention to matters of social justice. A group of Tudor statesmen and humanists known collectively as the Commonwealth Men sought to address the social ills of their day through government intervention. They believed the truest purpose of the state was to advance the welfare of its subjects.
- As a consequence, they took measures like advocating stronger interference of the state in the economy. They also pioneered ideas about government's responsibility to alleviate poverty that culminated in the first, tentative steps toward one of the Renaissance's greatest social experiments: the English Poor Laws.
- These laws took many forms during the 16th century and beyond, but their underlying principle—that government should take up the duty of providing charity to its most needy citizens—was linked in key ways to the larger reform agenda of the Northern humanists.

Suggested Reading

Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*.

Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe*.

Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Erasmus is called the prince of humanists. Do you think he's deserving of that title, or should it be awarded to one of the Italian humanists?
- 2 What do you think most distinguished the Christian humanists from their Italian counterparts? How did they appear to put the past to work in their own times?

LECTURE 18

Northern Renaissance Art and Music



The Northern Renaissance shared much with the Italian Renaissance, but the two also differed in key ways. That familiar rubric of similarity and difference exists concerning the subject of art as well. The northern painters, sculptors, and musicians were also in search of commissions, but in the process of giving artistic expression, they and their patrons left behind a dazzling legacy of what it meant to be human in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries.

Matthias Grünewald

- Artist Matthias Grünewald (c. 1470–1528) created what is considered his greatest masterpiece for the Monastery of St. Anthony at Isenheim. That was a town in the Alsatian region of what is today northeastern France but was in the early 16th century part of the Holy Roman Empire. The masterpiece was the altarpiece to be displayed in the sanctuary of the church.
- Contemporary altarpieces produced in Italy had begun prioritizing the presentation of a single scene. However, Grünewald favored the old style, featuring polyptychs, or many scenes, flanked by wings with additional images. These wings could be opened and closed as suited to both the preservation and the mystery of the piece.
- For his monastic patrons at Isenheim, Grünewald created a massive piece depicting the crucifixion of Christ on its exterior, with St. Sebastian on the left and St. Anthony on the right. When the outer wings were opened, scenes honoring the Virgin Mary's life were revealed. Finally, with the opening of the innermost wings, a series of carved and gilded figures are flanked by painted scenes from the life of St. Anthony, a fitting thematic focus to honor the monastery's patron saint.
- The outer scenes reveal important points about the form, function, and contexts of Northern Renaissance art. The crucifixion is not a serene sacrifice on display, in which a dying Christ manages to be elevated beyond mortal pains. Instead, this is a suffering Christ, his body covered in suppurating wounds.
- Meanwhile, Grünewald's depiction of St. Anthony's image captures temptation and torment. He looks out with a serene expression, but a demon appears over his shoulder to menace him.
- The images reminded the viewer of the biblical lesson that torment was purposeful, with the ability to purify and even sanctify. It would also have communicated the message that the mortal world was transitory and that all suffering would cease. That would have been quite impactful for audiences at the time, whose world involved hardships such as the plague.

The Function of Art

- Art had purpose and function during the Renaissance. As a consequence, it offers a valuable window into the decorations of daily living and the devotional life of past people. Exactly what and who were being celebrated in the north had much to do with the context and circumstances of political, religious, economic, and social conditions there.
- Unlike the Italian city-states, many of which had powerful republican political traditions, in much of the north, monarchs ruled. They were the ones who paid for sumptuous tapestries, paintings, and other fine objects to celebrate their wealth and to project their power.
- Interestingly, though, it was in two parts of Europe without the tradition of strong monarchy that artistic activity flourished and that created the look and feel of the Northern Renaissance: the cities of Flanders in the Low Countries of northwestern Europe and those of the Holy Roman Empire. These two areas enjoyed an economic prosperity from maritime trade and commercial enterprise that allowed their elites the ability to underwrite the culture of the Northern Renaissance.
- Artists were active elsewhere, but it was Flemish and German artists whose work would be most in vogue in the north. They frequently found employment in foreign courts, particularly England and France, exporting their signature styles throughout the northern lands. Their style's most identifiable emphasis was realism.

People in Northern Art

- Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c. 1525–1569) turned his artistic eye to the rustic people in the countryside. His paintings captured the rhythms of their daily lives, with activities like dancing, socializing, and working. It was a subject previously considered unworthy of artistic comment, but pieces like *Children's Games* and *The Peasant Wedding* serve as a glorious celebration of human life.

- People populated northern European art. Portraiture had far more cache among northern artists than those in Italy. Italian artists considered portrait art more mechanical and less dynamic than other projects, although many Italian workshops bustled with activity to meet commissions for portraits.
- In the north, though, portrait artists were celebrated as such, including the Germans Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) and Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543). The lives and careers of both men were powerfully shaped by the advent of the Reformation.
- Cranach came to serve as an illustrator of the Reformation. His studies of early Reformation theologians, including Luther himself, helped communicate the dignity of these leading figures and, by extension, the righteousness of their cause.
- Hans Holbein fled the upheaval of Reformation at home. He ended up spending a significant portion of his working life in England, where he was witness to another Reformation at the court of Henry VIII.
- Holbein is blamed, somewhat unfairly, for the shortest and arguably the most unsuccessful of Henry's marriages, this one to the German princess Anne of Cleves. Holbein was commissioned to paint Anne during the marriage negotiations, as the king had yet to see his proposed bride. Holbein's portrait shows a demure young woman, pleasing enough to the king to elicit his agreement to the match.
- Henry was far more impressed with Holbein's image of Anne than with Anne herself. The marriage couldn't be called off by the time Henry came face to face with Anne. However, it was hastily undone, and Anne was given some nice country estates to retire to, while Henry searched for his fifth wife.

Music of the Northern Renaissance

- The court of the dukes of Burgundy served as a hive of accomplished visual artists. The dukes also employed musicians, including Guillaume Dufay (c. 1400–1474), considered by many to be the most important composer of his era.
- Dufay was born in the north, but he traveled to and lived in Italy for a while. That circumstance apparently helped him generate a hybrid musical style, a blend of the late medieval sound popular in France and of the early Italian Renaissance.
- Dufay moved nimbly between the secular and the sacred, composing music for both. One of his musical innovations involved replacing the medieval chants traditionally used for the Mass with more dynamic and complex secular tunes.
- Dufay composed popular music as well, pieces that were to accompany the feasting and social gatherings in courts and in the homes of prosperous merchants. He helped spearhead a new direction for music, away from religious spaces and into civic and domestic spaces.
- The other great northern composer was Frenchman Josquin des Prez (1450–1521). His talents were greatly admired among contemporaries, who saw him as a visionary. Josquin's fame stretched the length of Christendom, although comparatively little is known about his personal life. Among his many patrons were Ercole d'Este of Ferrara and France's Louis XII.
- Like Dufay, Josquin contributed both sacred and secular music in a prolific career. His polyphonic sound added a complexity to vocal music that inspired many subsequent composers.

Suggested Reading

Atlas, *Renaissance Music*.

Borchert, *Van Eyck to Dürer*.

Haribson, *The Mirror of the Artist*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Do you include the work of northern artists in your roster of most famous Renaissance images, or do you associate northern art more readily with the Middle Ages or the Reformation? Why do you think Renaissance art is considered predominantly Italian?
- 2 What factors do you think best explain the Northern Renaissance's juxtaposition of the sacred and the secular?

LECTURE 19

Northern Renaissance Literature and Drama



he rebirth of the classical world and its values in the Renaissance led to a preoccupation with uncovering and articulating a better, richer understanding of the human experience. This lecture focuses on Renaissance authors and playwrights who offered entertainments and edification through the written and performed word.

Vernacular Language and Christine de Pizan

- The rise and impact of vernacular language is an important factor in Renaissance writing. Greek and Latin mattered in the north, as did Hebrew and other ancient languages. However, it was vernacular language that allowed northern authors to voice ideas about their world in vibrant new ways, to rewrite the rules of language, and to add to the lexicon.
- In the final years of 14th-century France, a celebrated poet, biographer, and social critic embarked on a literary career that would score offers of support from aristocratic and royal patrons as close as Burgundy and as distant as Milan and England. Her name was Christine de Pizan (1364–1430), and while many French writers deserve credit for helping popularize literary French, Pizan's contributions may be the most enduring.
- Following the early death of her husband, 25-five-year-old Pizan needed a means of supporting her young children and her aging mother. She turned to writing and achieved early success as a poet before authoring advice books and treatises on education.



Along with Christine de Pizan, another notable French writer was François Rabelais. His tales of the giants Gargantua and Pantagruel feature unflattering depictions of lawyers and clerics, and his giants discuss serious business.

🌀 François Rabelais (1494–1553) 🌀

- In what are perhaps her most well-known writings today, she repeatedly and systematically challenged contemporary misogyny and defended women's virtues and valor. She helped initiate a debate that would stretch the length of the Renaissance period and is known as the *querelle des femmes* (the “woman question”). At its core were rival interpretations about the nature and abilities of women.
- Opponents pursued their positions in a call-and-response fashion. The need to advance, defend, or refute positions required more and more words, a structure that shaped the development of vernacular language.

Don Quixote

- Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* also made use of the vernacular—in this case, Castilian—to create memorable characters and to comment on and question contemporary social conventions. The young years of Cervantes (1547–1616) are cloaked in mystery, but he ended up in Italy, joining the Spanish army in Naples.
- This was a decision that put him in action in an epic clash between Spain and an assembled coalition of Christian allies against the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. He received several wounds during the Spanish victory and considered his service in the conflict a source of pride. It also shaped ideas of military valor and the rigors of war that permeated his later writings.
- After a lengthy recuperation, Cervantes returned to service and saw additional action before his ship was seized by pirates in 1575. Cervantes was sold into slavery and ransomed by his family five years later. His captivity was another harrowing experience that found its way into his fictional output.
- Cervantes later worked for the state as a tax collector and procurer of supplies for the assembling of the fabled Spanish Armada. Irregularities in his accounts led to his incarceration and dismissal from government service. He and his household struggled to make ends meet, descending into poverty.

- That poverty was unrelieved by the appearance of part one of *Don Quixote* in 1605 and part two 10 years later. The book, though, was wildly successful. It clearly struck a chord with contemporary audiences, in part because of its compulsively readable style and in part because of its bold mockery of old-fashioned chivalric tales.
- *Don Quixote* is an empathetic survey of a Spain at once master of the world and teetering on the brink of financial ruin and political weakness. Cervantes infuses the delusional, idealistic character Don Quixote and his simple squire Sancho Panza with an undeniable dignity that still appeals to audiences. Along with many other Spanish writers, Cervantes created enthusiasm in reading audiences for the vernacular.

England

- Vernacular language was important in England, too. It had flourished in the 14th century, particularly in the hands of William Langland (1332–1386), author of the morality tale *Piers the Plowman*, and Geoffrey Chaucer (1340–1400), author of *The Canterbury Tales*. A bewildering fusion of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and French influences, vernacular English continued to lag behind Latin as a literary language until the second half of the 16th century, though.
- The literary Renaissance was slow in coming to England, partly the product of a xenophobia sparked by Henry VIII's marital misadventures. However, during the reign of Henry's daughter Elizabeth, a generation of literary luminaries created a truly English Renaissance. They wrote in a delightfully unstable fashion.

William Shakespeare

- English poet and playwright William Shakespeare is rather challenging to track down in the historical record, especially at what were likely really significant periods in his early life, as when he first lived and worked in London. There are some intriguing holes in Shakespeare's life story, explored by Stephen Greenblatt in his *Will in the World*.

- This course will leave the thorny questions of authorship—that is, if Shakespeare was really Shakespeare—to the experts. Instead, this course suggests that if William Shakespeare was indeed the son of a glover and alderman in Stratford—locally, but not university, educated—those circumstances might serve as evidence of how broadly the fashions and passions of the Renaissance permeated English society.
- Even this middling-status young man, whose father's fortunes steadily sank during Shakespeare's teen years, came into contact with the means and motives for getting to know the ancients. Shakespeare was a shameless borrower of plots. Like many of his contemporaries, he was fascinated and inspired by classical settings.
- However, Shakespeare's writings weren't merely slavish replications of past tales. They were modulated and reformulated for his audiences and times. Shakespeare was himself an entrepreneur in the theatre business; it was in the best interest of his bottom line that his plays speak to his audiences.
- Shakespeare's plays cheekily examined timeless human faults and flaws, but they also turned a critical eye to current circumstance. Verona and Padua in his hands had curious similarities to London and its environs. Contemporaries used Shakespeare's work to communicate messages of their own, as when the supporters of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex (1565–1601), commissioned a performance of *Richard II* on the eve of the ill-fated rebellion that led to Essex's execution as a traitor.
- Shakespeare's history play, which recounted Richard's fall from power and abdication partly as the result of bad advice, represented for ringleaders of the Essex rebellion a lesson for reigning monarch Elizabeth. The lesson was: Beware of taking bad advice or you might end up like Richard.
- The timeliness of Shakespeare's language is also clear. For example, he reveled in dirty jokes, puns, insults, and street slang. When the right words couldn't be found, Shakespeare simply made them up. English was a growing, breathing entity on his pages.

Suggested Reading

Altmann and McGrady, ed., *Christine de Pizan*.

Greenblatt, *Will in the World*.

Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Does the rise of the vernacular indicate a shift in Renaissance sensibilities, away from the focus on classicism?
- 2 What role do vernacular plays and stories have in shaping identifiably national identities?

LECTURE 20

Did Women Have a Renaissance?

his lecture examines what is known as the woman question, a consideration of the virtues and vices of women that played out during the centuries covered by this course. It begins with an overview of the historical context and then discusses the broad contours of the woman question as it developed during the course of a public literary debate about both liberal education and contemporary perceptions of women's abilities and deficiencies. Along the way, the lecture considers whether women had a Renaissance.

Overview

- The educational changes that accompanied the Renaissance constituted an academic revolution in many key ways. Consider Pico della Mirandola's confident assertion that *man* had been granted the power to be whatever he wished, noting that if he cultivated his intellectual ability, "he will be an angel and the son of God. Who could not help but admire this great shape-shifter?"
- This categorically and confidently masculine orientation of the language employed by the humanists suggests that women were missing from both the training in and the exercise of the new learning. That circumstance led scholar Joan Kelly to ask famously in 1977: Did women have a Renaissance? Kelly answered her own query with a resounding no, but subsequent scholars have offered alternative interpretations and pioneered research methods designed to uncover the educational changes that women were experiencing.
- They've initiated a lively debate on women and their experiences during the Renaissance. Debating women is at the heart of the *querelle des femmes*, the French phrase translated most frequently as "the woman question."
- The question of woman's nature was not unique to the Renaissance; the early modern debate was shaped in part by a series of medieval texts that emphasized the evil, cunning, and secretive nature of women. New to the Renaissance era, however, was the print revolution, which began to publicize and popularize the arguments of the debate.

Debates

- The chief points of contention in the early modern *querelle* involved women's nature, authority, and education. Participants in the debate, both men and women, employed various argumentative and rhetorical strategies in their writing either to make or to respond to defamatory claims against women.
- In Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Mulieribus Claris* (*On Famous Women*), completed in the 1360s, the Italian writer established many of the strategies employed by other authors. Boccaccio's piece, often

considered the first of the *querelle* texts, consists of biographies of 106 women identified as exemplary by their performance of the roles of wife, mother, ruler, and warrior.

- It was a celebration of women, tempered by contemporary gender ideals. Some of Boccaccio's famous women were laudable in areas traditionally associated with women—motherhood, for example. Others, although still famously exemplary, were unnatural for the day, such as those who ruled over men. *On Famous Women* created a pattern of discussing women through the lens of decidedly atypical women of the past, often identified in contemporary parlance as “worthies.”

Italian Women

- Women in the courts of Italy were applauded for their education and refinement. Other women in the Italian Renaissance who didn't possess access to such noble environments also took up subjects in which female proficiency was dismissed by Florentine chancellor Leonardo Bruni as a “vain display.” A handful of women were allowed a masculine style of education, focusing on the typically masculine disciplines of classical languages, oratory, history, and moral philosophy.
- Taken collectively, the careers of such women in the Italian Renaissance were relatively undistinguished. In key ways, the deck was stacked against them. Most engaged in academic pursuits for only a brief time, as girls and young women, and the reasons behind that brevity are important.
- First, only unmarried women possessed the freedom to pursue a humanist education. Societal norms during the Renaissance allowed no place for studious wives, whose energies and efforts were to be directed toward the care of husbands, children, and households.
- Second, the primary goal of humanist education was to train individuals to impact the world around them, particularly through service to the state. Women, however, were conclusively barred from a life of public action by a contemporary theory of femininity that prized chastity, silence, and obedience.

Isotta Nogarola

- It's not surprising that the learned women of the early Italian Renaissance focused much of writings on the defense of women. Some sought to rehabilitate their sex through a reconsideration of the most significant extant text: the Bible. The figure garnering the greatest attention was Eve, whose role in the creation story as a physical derivative of Adam reflected her subordinate status.
- A notable writer in this area was Isotta Nogarola (1418–1466) of Verona. Nogarola took up the task of examining ideas about women in an exchange with male scholar Ludovico Foscarini (1409–1480). The specific subject was original sin.
- While the conventional view held that Eve was more culpable than her mate for the loss of paradise because she'd succumbed to the wiles of the serpent, Nogarola countered that Eve was in fact less culpable. Nogarola's position was that, as a woman, Eve was naturally more susceptible to temptation than Adam.
- Conceding the inherent frailty of the archetypal woman may not seem indicative of a vigorous defense of Eve and her descendants. However, Nogarola's work was nonetheless extraordinary. It represented an eloquent and learned attack on traditional ideas about the origin of female inferiority that drew on her training in history and on her critical analysis and application of the writings of ancient authorities.

Other Learned Women

- Other Italian women took up the cause by emphasizing women's capacity for advancement, too. Laura Cereta of Brescia highlighted the strictures placed on learned women by men. She also pointed out the detrimental role of other women, who struck out against those they saw as violating traditional roles associated with their own sex.
- In an oration in praise of the liberal arts, learned woman Cassandra Fedele of Venice delivered a sensitive reflection on the intangible benefits of learning. She wrote, "even if the study of literature offers

women no rewards or honors, I believe women must nonetheless pursue and embrace such studies alone for the pleasure and enjoyment they contain.”

- Learned women of the later Italian Renaissance submitted more pointed critiques of the constraints that posed obstructions to female success and equality. Both *The Worth of Women* by Moderata Fonte and *The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men* by Lucrezia Marinella struck out at contemporary assumptions they felt limited female achievement. In the process, they mounted spirited defenses of women’s many virtues.



🌀 Laura Cereta (1469–1499) 🌀

- Examples of learned women can be found, too, from the Northern Renaissance. Margaret More (1505–1544), the oldest daughter of famed English statesman and writer Thomas More, was educated by a private tutor in Latin, Greek, and the humanities.
- Much of her writing has been lost, but letters written to her father during his imprisonment prior to his execution by King Henry VIII and her translation of Erasmus’s *Precatio Dominica* have survived. The latter text earns her the distinction of having published her work in her own lifetime. It was a practice her father cautioned her against, on the grounds that it would expose her to censure.

The 16th Century

- As the debate on women advanced further into the 16th century, it took on a greater urgency, in part the product of a shift from theory to practice with regard to women’s abilities. The century witnessed queens regnant and regent in a number of European states. Included among them were Catherine de’ Medici in French lands, Marie de Guise and her daughter Mary Stuart in Scotland, and the Tudor sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, in England.

- Under those circumstances, works posing theoretical questions about female authority gave way to more alarmist prognostications of the very real dangers implicit in female rule. One of the most famous is the work of Calvinist preacher John Knox (1513–1572). His *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* was published in 1558 as a critique of female rulers in England and Scotland. In it, Knox identified the rule of women as abhorrent and a perversion of the natural order.
- Published responses to Knox quickly followed, offering reassessments of female rule that questioned his interpretation of “nature” and his employment of scripture and history as evidence of his conclusions. In his *An Harborow for Faithful and True Subjects*, published in 1559, Englishman John Aylmer (1521–1594) wrote that Knox’s text misunderstood “nature” as an absolute and hierarchical system.
- Texts such as Knox and Aylmer’s joined many others disseminated throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. They indicate the dialogic structure of the early modern debate on women.

The Swetnam Controversy

- Authors responded directly to one another in print, an indication that writings on female virtues and vices had a significant readership. A particular example from early 17th-century England known as the Swetnam controversy illustrates this point.
- In 1615 Joseph Swetnam published a text entitled *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women*. Swetnam, writing under a pseudonym, had the goal of revealing women’s many flaws and foibles.
- Other authors rushed to refute his assessments. Author Daniel Tuvil weighed in first, in 1616’s *Asylum Veneris*. Tuvil authored a vindication of women coupled with instruction for proper female behavior. His piece belongs in the courtesy-book tradition that employed print as a medium for the moral instruction of women.

- More texts followed in 1617. A notable one was Rachel Speght's *A Muzzle for a Black Mouth*. The piece drew on biblical examples to expose errors in Swetnam's attack. In 1620, a postscript to the Swetnam controversy followed with the play *Swetnam, the Woman-Hater*. The frontispiece of the published text shows Swetnam himself being arraigned by women.
- Scholars suggest that the popularity of these works provides access to a sense of the *vox populi*, or voice of the people. They were published in affordable formats, putting them solidly within reach of an increasingly literate population in possession of a disposable income.

The Women's Renaissance

- During the Renaissance, assessments of female virtues and vices joined printed commentaries on male virtues and vices. The *querelle* indicates that women and their defenders, many of whom were men, were part of a new, sustained consideration of the human condition that helped to define the liberal arts during the renaissance.
- The early modern debate on women and its popularity indicate a growing acknowledgement that, like men, women were worthy of scholarly consideration. Additionally, women themselves were capable of participation in that investigation and, to a lesser degree, in the new liberal education.
- Even if their time engaged in the pursuit of learning was limited, the learned women of the Renaissance challenged expectations and contested the contemporary status quo. Education wasn't a passive process for them, but one that required constant effort, energy, and persistence in the face of detractors. Modern scholars should see them not as imprisoned oddities but as individuals of boldness and courage.

Suggested Reading

Nogarola, *Complete Writings*.

O'Malley, ed., *Defences of Women*.

Warner, *The Ideas of Man and Woman in Renaissance France*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Why do you think so few women, aside from queens, are considered to be part of the Renaissance legacy?
- 2 Are there modern equivalents of the woman question engaging the public in the consideration of individuals' abilities and access to education?

LECTURE 21

Renaissance Life: The Rural Experience



his lecture and some of its successors sketch out the conditions of life during the early modern centuries, talking about the structures—physical and ideological—that shaped the lived experiences of past peoples. The explorations begin in the geographical setting of the countryside, where the vast majority of the European population lived across the Renaissance centuries. In particular, this lecture considers the man-made and nature-made conditions that shaped rural living prior to the birth of the Industrial Revolution.

Rural Daily Life

- In the countryside, the workday began well before daybreak itself and extended until after dark. Even without the convenience of modern lighting, labor could be completed, either in darkness or the dim light afforded by candles or moonlight. There was much work to be done. Survival depended on the combined efforts of all members of the household: men, women, and the young alike.
- Their tasks were differentiated, with women responsible for a range of domestic tasks and men for labor in the fields or in the pasturelands, watching over the flocks. Children of both sexes stayed close to their mothers until the age of six or so, when they started to shadow their same-sex parent for training in gendered work activities. During harvest time, everyone pitched in to see the crops brought safely in.
- There was seasonality to the length of these workdays, being longer in summer than in winter to take as much advantage of natural light as possible. Sunday was supposedly a day of rest and worship, but evidence suggests it could also be a workday, whenever tasks and necessity demanded.
- Feast days occasionally broke up the daily grind. The Christian year was replete with opportunities to celebrate or to reflect on holiness in a faith tradition populated with saints aplenty. In 1450, perhaps 50 days of the year were given over to these holy days.
- Many of these Christian holy days came loaded with prohibitions. Certain seasons of the year, like Lent, likewise sought to regulate the behavior of the faithful. However, holy days often had an element of festival about them, mixing the saintly with the profane. They afforded time to visit with friends, to eat and drink, and to participate in village merriments.

Two Renaissances

- In earlier lectures, the Renaissance was synonymous with cultural and political dynamism, often under the guise of recovery of a glorious past in Italian lands or animated by the desire to bring about a Christian rebirth in the north. However, this lecture and the succeeding lectures on Renaissance life will refer to the Renaissance in a looser fashion—as a designator of a historical period rather than movements of a rebirth.
- The reason is that there were serious limits as to the Renaissance's reach under the more narrow cultural and political definition. For example, aside from some exceptional examples, women didn't have much of a Renaissance. The vast majority of men didn't have a much of a Renaissance in the classic sense, either. The Renaissance was a largely urban event for the educated and the powerful, yet most people—80 percent or more in much of Europe—called the countryside home.
- In terms of people, as the Renaissance began, there was still a sense of the division into three different types synonymous with the Middle Ages: those who fight (monarchs and nobles), those who pray (the clergy), and those who work (everyone else).
- This so-called three orders theory, although articulated in medieval sources themselves, was always more idealized than real. There was tremendous diversity within each order. For example, a king wasn't the same as an unemployed knight seeking a patron, even though they both fought. However, one useful contribution of the three orders theory is that it communicates something of the perceived sense of immobility in the quality and condition of people.
- In the countryside, change was afoot. By the end of the period, certain proto-industrial practices emerged—new ideas and realities about land holding and land usage, for example. Despite these changes, the persistence of hierarchy was strong, and so it was a time of tensions.

Vulnerability

- The Renaissance was a period of tremendous vulnerability for those living in the countryside. Poor weather and animal epidemics initiated profound misery for those surviving through subsistence agriculture. For example, the 16th century saw a protracted agrarian crisis, featuring back-to-back failed harvests that brought with them not just want but famine.
- Differences in environmental conditions defined the tasks of people living on the land. Scholars can identify a basic divide between lowland, arable areas, which were suitable for cereal grains in the north and grapes and olives in the south, and highland pasture zones, given over to the animal husbandry.
- In the arable zones, peasants tended to be congregated in nucleated villages. In contrast, independent homesteads were more typical for those involved in pastoral activities. Pastoral zones featured more scattered, isolated settlements.

Tenancy

- The people working any of these lands were not, as a general rule, the ones who owned them. This leads to the complicated subject of land tenure. For example, a nucleated village would have residents such as a priest and a lord of the manor. The lord owned but did not work the land. He also owned the implements and structures to store and process grain into bread, which peasants could use in return for various forms of compensation.
- In this arrangement, peasants were actually tenants rather than landowners. Some held land at the lord's pleasure for whatever period he specified and at the terms he specified, which often took the form of labor service. This type of tenancy, more a feature in the eastern parts of Europe, was a rather precarious one, with no guarantee of continued occupation.

- In the west, landholding traditions offered a bit more security. Leases tended to be longer, even across generations. Customary dues or fees upon the death of tenant and the transfer of his occupancy to his heirs safeguarded the maintenance of holdings within families. Rents here often involved labor services, but they could also be met through other means, like cash payments.
- Post-plague realities, particularly the increased demand for laborers, allowed certain peasants to gain improved leasing terms or relaxed terms of service. In some areas, there were peasant owner-occupiers. In historian Barbara Hanawalt's study of England after the Black Death, she identified the concentration of holdings in the hands of ambitious peasants who saw opportunities and seized them, even when their gains came at the expense of their own neighbors.

Inflation

- By the 16th century, post-plague population stagnation had passed; populations everywhere were on the rise, and that meant a labor surplus rather than shortage. As a consequence, the competition for land began to heat up, particularly in western areas of Europe. Landlords there faced declining profits because of inflation.
- Prices were spiraling upward, and in the face of landlords' inability to adjust terms negotiated and ratified by tradition, their bottom lines began to suffer. The solution was to pioneer new terms of tenure—such as shorter leases and the requirement for cash payments—and to enclose lands for their own exclusive use that had before been enjoyed by tenants to garden or pasture animals.
- The process of enclosure was the subject of pointed criticism at the pens of moralists, including humanist Thomas More. It made making ends meet for many peasant families much more challenging.
- Some workers found themselves out of the tenure game altogether and forced instead to sell their labor, a circumstance that replaced at least some previous measure of autonomy with dependence. Women were

paid less, so it often made sense for them to work whatever limited land the family might possess so that their husbands could seek paid labor at the higher rate.

- A hierarchy among the peasants themselves began to develop. The hierarchy distinguished the prosperous yeoman farmer at the top from the husbandman in the relatively comfortable middle, and it distinguished those two groups from the landless laborers and cottagers (who might have a dwelling structure but no land).
- The most substantial landlords were increasingly drawn into urban areas, but they weren't truly hands-on administrators of their estates. It was a group of appointed officials—a steward, a reeve, and a hayward, to offer a small sampling of titles—who managed the day-to-day business of manorial villages. These men were charged with collecting taxes and fees from peasants, maintaining justice and order, adjudicating disputes, dealing with crime, and enforcing customs concerning the use of land and public space.
- They often did so in the forum of manorial courts. Peasants themselves served as jurors, resolving contested boundaries or charges of communal customs being violated. They were selected not for their objectivity but because they were well positioned to offer supposedly expert insight on the matters under dispute.
- These trends combined measures of opportunities in some areas with repression in others. That led to a series of problems.

Peasant Reactions

- The most spectacular responses to these alterations were peasant rebellions. Europe played host to many of them, including one in France in 1358, the English Rising of 1381, and multiple revolts in the German-speaking lands. The causes of these revolts are varied but can be ultimately traced back to peasant unhappiness with their economic realities.

- Peasants generally sought a return to fairer past practices to counter the innovations of taxation or changes in policies concerning access to or distribution of resources. When peasants took up arms to protest their treatment, their efforts at change ended in failure and considerable repression.
- They could do some damage and create fear, but ultimately, all of these peasant revolts were quashed. There were also more localized disturbances over issues like rents, fences, and interpersonal disputes.

Poverty

- In part as a result of these changes in rural living conditions, a new typology of poverty developed. The poor had always been a part of the rural landscape. Those who practiced subsistence-level agriculture were impoverished by nearly every connotation of the term.
- Additionally, there had always been those individuals made vulnerable by age and condition: widows, orphans, the elderly, and the mentally or physically handicapped. They were universally recognized as worthy of aid.
- However, economic patterns emerging in this period gave rise to other forms of poverty. One was seasonal: The so-called laboring poor sought work and could find it at the times of the year that required an influx of additional workers. They struggled at other times.
- Another, more contentious form of poverty was voluntary, manifested in the form of the so-called sturdy beggar. Sturdy beggars, also dubbed the idle poor, were physically capable of work. However, they refused, preferring, at least in the minds of critics, to live a life of crime or dissolution. Many of them went to the cities to ply their trade, engendering concern and initiating new policies.

Suggested Reading

Fumerton, *Unsettled*.

Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism in Europe*.

Prak, ed., *Early Modern Capitalism*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What kind of overlap do you think existed between elite concerns during the Renaissance and those of non-elites living in the Renaissance countryside?
- 2 Do you think we should see the peasants as subject to the conditions of the world around them, or is it more accurate to see them as agents of change as well?
- 3 Where do you see evidence of the narrow distance between plenty and want in our world?

LECTURE 22

Renaissance Life: The Urban Experience



his lecture explores some of the key feature of urban Renaissance living. It first tackles the question of how to define urban living during the Renaissance. Then, it takes a look at a trio of early modern institutions: craft guilds, confraternities, and public drinking establishments. These will give a window in urban experiences for rich and poor alike.

Defining Urban Living

- The question of what constituted urban living during the Renaissance is a point of debate that has animated historians for decades. While there are no hard-and-fast rules that everyone accepts, this part of the lecture will sketch out some general features.
- First, size mattered. The numbers cited as the threshold for labeling a settlement a city have changed over time, but for this course's purposes, a good general rule is 2,000 residents. There was an urban hierarchy, from small market towns like Devizes, which didn't make it to the 2,000-resident mark, to a handful of big cities of 50,000 or more residents. Many of those were on the Italian Peninsula, including Florence, Rome, Venice, and Naples.
- Beyond the peninsula, big cities were fewer and farther between. England had only London and France had only Paris, for example. Cities with populations of 5,000 and above dot the map of Renaissance Europe, although the dots appear in different levels of concentration in different areas. The Low Countries featured many of them; France, the Iberian Peninsula, and the Holy Roman Empire had a sizable number, too.
- Some urban areas built physical barriers around them. Access to water and trade routes was a feature of many urban areas as well.

Urban Life

- Renaissance cities featured many advantages for the people who called them home, including economic opportunities and personal freedoms, a range of goods and service for sale, various forms of sociability and support, and a civic identity. Cities grew and sometimes contracted in fits and starts, featuring the cramped, narrow streets still on display in many areas of Europe today.
- Even without careful design in physical layout, it's clear that cities paid close attention to their conditions. Rules and regulations established by urban authorities were plentiful and took aim at a wide range of problems thought to be disruptive to good order, legislating when and how to dispose of waste, for example.

- Urban areas had more than their fair share of violence, often in the form of public riots and uprisings. Some were the result of political factionalism. Others were protests of economic regulations or prompted by supply scarcity.
- Cities were also the sites of great disasters, in part because of their concentrated populations and lack of effective sanitation measures. Plagues, fires, and floods devoured urban residents and their property, despite the efforts of local governments to establish safeguards to prevent such loss.

Craft Guilds

- The lecture now turns to some of the institutions that helped shape the Renaissance urban experience, starting with craft guilds. Today, a guild has a somewhat hybrid identity: On the one hand, it calls to mind a quaint, old-fashioned approach to economic organization, with a modest shop populated by a master, his apprentices, and perhaps some wage laborers. That shop often doubled as the master's household.



- There's an at least superficially paternalistic element to this structure, with masters helping prepare young workers for their own future careers. There was self-interest, too; masters benefitted through what today's people might think of as unpaid or underpaid internships.
- The masters themselves had attained the highest level of professional competence in their field, as adjudged by their production of a masterpiece (and the payment of the requisite association fees, of course). As a result, they enjoyed various personal and professional advantages through guild membership: They drew up and enforced regulations for their trade, designed to codify their advantages; they received support from other members in times of crisis; and they often gained access to political roles.
- Guildsmen performed a variety of civic, ceremonial, and charitable functions. In addition to the enfranchisement that election to the guilds entailed, guildsmen worked to promote their craft and to reinscribe their elite status.
- Despite their useful functions, guilds can look repressive. By definition, guilds were exclusionary and protectionist: They created monopolies by restricting membership, by controlling the educational mysteries of their craft, and first setting and policing wages, prices, and quality.
- However, reality often differed from the ideals expressed in guild-governing statutes. While women may have been formally excluded from membership in most guilds, for example, they could find work associated with craft guilds through other mechanisms.

Confraternities

- In Renaissance Europe, religion also offered numerous opportunities for the formation of community and communal identities. Expressions of piety took many forms, both institutionalized and informal. This part of the lecture will focus on one such expression: confraternities, or religious guilds.

- These groups were religious brotherhoods. Their members sought spiritual assurance of salvation through common association, but without taking holy orders as clerics. Some confraternities were exclusively male in membership, but not all. Some accepted only women. These religious organizations could also combine women and men, as well as individuals of a variety of ages and status groups.
- In Renaissance Italy, in particular, confraternities proved extraordinarily popular: Estimates have as many as one-third of adults as belonging to one. More than 50 were founded in Florence alone during the second half of the 15th century.
- Like some of the other associations of the time, confraternities developed mission statements, and records of their activities allow scholars access to their intentions and regulations. For example, the small Florentine company of Santo Spirito focused on liturgical activities.
- Confraternities represented a powerful fusion of spiritual energies and charitable impulses. They founded hospitals, cared for the sick, engaged in poor relief, and helped at-risk women in danger of falling into a life of prostitution—or assisted in the rehabilitation of those who'd already fallen.
- Confraternities also offered opportunities for sociability among members. By bringing people into contact, some of whom might have very little chance to interact with one another otherwise, they provided the opportunity to build and expand social bonds and networks.

Alehouses

- Alehouses are this lecture's final case study. Intoxicating drink was ubiquitous in Renaissance Europe, both north and south of the Alps. Water was believed to be unwholesome, and it often was. Fermented beverages, on the other hand, had a reduced risk of harmful bacteria. Further, water was somewhat stigmatized as the drink of the poor (although elites mixed their wine with water to make it last longer).



- On the whole, though, drink was consumed in large quantities. Courtiers in Italy might drink three-quarters of a liter of wine per day. There was a daily ration of a gallon of beer in England—although even contemporary visitors expressed astonishment at the volume of drink the English could put away.
- Much of this drinking took place in the home, in the normal course of the consumption of daily meals. Mealtimes were communal occasions themselves for members of the household. The blurred line between public and private during this activity also means that mealtimes found friends and companions breaking bread and raising a cup together in the domestic space of the household.
- Some houses acquired an even more public identity, a circumstance that came to be matched by the designation “public house” (later shortened to “pub”). Here, proprietors produced drink for retail sale on site, and clientele came to relax. Activities at these establishments included gaming, gossiping, singing, dancing, and exchanging the news.
- Drinking culture seems resolutely male at first glance, but women, too, patronized these drinking establishments. There was greater propensity for women’s presence to result in condemnation or censure, though, if their activities were adjudged immodest or demonstrated a lack of self-control. Men could be roundly criticized for squandering their resources in the procurement of drink, but often without the excoriating attacks reserved for women seen to be abusing propriety through indulgence.
- Sources document the vital role of public houses in medieval and Renaissance England in attending to the needs of pilgrims and other travelers. For example, 17th-century commentator Robert Harris put the link between hospitality and public houses succinctly: “Travellers must needs have drinke, therefore there must be Alehouses.”
- Drinking establishments also catered to the needs of locals. They earned the wrath of medieval and Renaissance moralists, including the 14th-century author of *The Remorse of Conscience*, a treatise on the seven deadly sins: “God does His miracles in His church; the devil does his, which are the opposite, in the tavern.”

- Taken together, these various drinking establishments were ubiquitous in many areas of Renaissance Europe. A request from the Privy Council in England in 1577 to ascertain the number of inns, taverns, and alehouses was heeded by magistrates, who reported the presence of more than 17,000 public drinking houses. Eighty-five percent were labeled as alehouses, with much smaller percentages identified as taverns and inns.

Suggested Reading

Epstein, ed., *Town and Country in Europe*.
Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early
Modern England*.
Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 How different are the opportunities and organizations for sociability in our world from those in Renaissance Europe? How similar are they?
- 2 What current urban institutions and practices have replaced the ones discussed in this lecture?
- 3 Civic hierarchies were displayed and frequently challenged during the Renaissance period. How do contemporary urban leaders demonstrate their authority, and how was it challenged?

LECTURE 23

Renaissance Life: Crime, Deviance, and Honor



his lecture focuses on daily life during the Renaissance by examining points of personal crisis and their consequences. In particular, the lecture looks at the subjects of crime, deviance, and concepts of honor and shame. A point of focus is how early modern communities and authorities sought to order their world and to project their own morality outward—even as they held up for shame or correction those who were perceived as violating established expectations for good behavior.

Sexual and Gender Norms

- Sexual activity and the proper performance of gender norms could make and break reputations during the Renaissance. Moralists identified sexual honesty as a key component of Christian marriage, and so sexual purity before marriage was paramount—at least for women—and sexual fidelity within marriage was expected—again, at least for women.
- Issues of male authority and government were inextricably linked with female sexual honesty. The reputation of good fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons was formed in part by their ability to project control over their subordinates, a category that included daughters, wives, and even mothers, when widowed.

Insult and Innuendo

- During the Renaissance, insults and innuendos were intended to expose and sometimes to curb improper behavior. Both ecclesiastical and civil courts in Europe regularly heard complaints involving defamatory and scandalous speech during the course of their business.
- Despite the popularity of litigation, to sue someone for verbal assault was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it allowed the accuser to tell their side of the story, enlisting family and friends to help. On the other hand, it allowed the opponent to tell their side of the story, further publicizing all the damaging claims.
- The courts sternly punished those who spread false and malicious rumors, so it paid to govern one's tongue. Words spoken carelessly and out of anger could be costly—sometimes literally. They could also require the humiliation of public penance in church in front of the whole community.
- Spoken words weren't the only way to signal displeasure with one's neighbor. Accusations of misbehavior could take many other forms. Rhymes, libels, and songs could all broadcast reports of cheating spouses or domineering wives whose bossiness unmanned their husbands. The latter theme, of the henpecked husband, was a particularly popular one for early modern pamphlet writers as well as a number of Renaissance dramatists.

Public Shaming

- When the popular perception of impropriety reached a critical nexus, public shaming could even be carried out collectively. The most famous form involved a public procession to the ill-governed house itself. To attract attention, the march was designed to be as raucous and unruly as possible: Participants in the shame parade often noisily banged on pots and pans and drums.
- Once the procession arrived at its targeted destination, ringleaders pulled forward the offending figure or figures to subject him or her to ridicule in front of the assembled members of the community. They might, for example, make a cuckolded or henpecked husband ride backward on a horse, to drive home visually the message of the unnatural state in which his failed masculinity placed him.
- These processions were clearly designed to humiliate, but they were also designed to correct. The point wasn't simply to embarrass, but instead to incite the supposedly underperforming or misbehaving party to make changes so as to ensure future conformity. Further, these shame parades also served as a reminder to all present that they might one day find themselves in the same position if they violated behavioral expectations.

Regulating Sexuality

- Sexuality and its control were clearly integral to early modern concepts of honor. Attempts were made throughout the Renaissance centuries to regulate sexuality.
- There was a pervasive sentiment, especially in the southern portions of Europe, that commercial sex—prostitution—was a regrettable but necessary evil. Men had urges, so the line of thinking went, and those urges needed to be managed in such a way as to safeguard virtuous women. The resulting solution was the proliferation of so-called red light districts reserved for the sex trade.

- In the Mediterranean honor culture that defined Renaissance values in Italy and Spanish lands, the chastity of respectable women demanded constant vigilance to maintain both male and female honor. Because of that, prostitutes were an important ingredient in the recipe for a culture of otherwise carefully controlled female sexuality.
- The supposed absence of sexual honesty in these women meant that no loss of honor could occur. As a consequence, those who worked as prostitutes and their managers—bawds or pimps—were taxed, often regulated, and even subject to regular abuse by outraged moralists and exasperated civic officials. However, they were also grudgingly tolerated, and they did a brisk business.

Same-Sex Relationships

- Same-sex relationships were alternately condoned and condemned during the Renaissance, often based on the age and condition of the parties involved. Two pieces of context are important for sorting out the sources of this ambiguity.
- First, the Renaissance valorized the ancient world. Same-sex relationships featured prominently in various ancient societies. For example, the Greeks practiced the custom of pederasty, the sexual mentoring of a “beardless youth” by an older, more established but still unmarried man. At the same time, same-sex activities in ancient societies could be branded as deviant if the parties involved violated accepted norms, exhibiting too great a devotion or failing to shift to a heterosexual relationship at the appropriate developmental stage, for example.
- The second piece of context involves popularly accepted medical understandings of the human body during the Renaissance, most particularly the idea known as the one-sex model. This theory uses the male body as normative and therefore interprets the female body as an imperfect rendering of it. These ideas made the male body the only form of bodily human perfection.

- Despite various influences that legitimated same-sex desire for men, by the 13th century, regulations prohibiting same-sex physical relations treated such activities as a grievous moral error. They were often punishable by death under law, although not all authorities exacted such finality in their judgments.

Incest

- Incest was also a target of moral indignation and official correction during the Renaissance. In Devizes, England in 1560, for example, when John Maunfyllid confessed to intercourse with his unnamed mother, the court judged it both “heinous and ungodly” and imprisoned the pair.
- Incest was sufficiently stigmatized that it served as one of the most damaging charges leveled at Henry VIII of England’s second wife, Anne Boleyn, during her fall from power. Among those Anne was rumored to have bedded was her brother George.

Punishment

- During the Renaissance, fines often punished acts of misbehavior and violence. In many states, more serious crimes, like theft of goods above a certain value or murder, were punishable by death.
- One of the key issues involves the resources for punishment available to the authorities. Renaissance states did have prisons. These housed individuals waiting for trial, or those whose crimes were particularly egregious. However, long-term imprisonment was uncommon. Early modern governments didn’t possess the means required to construct residential prisons.
- Equally important, they didn’t possess the philosophy of crime necessary to create long-term incarceration. Correction for criminal activity was secured through much more spectacular means, like public execution. The forms of those punishments were intended to be instructive to audiences. They were the ones who could learn the lessons posed by the unfortunate criminals.



22cort la feste fut
 passee. les meske
 muon ou point
 nestoit amela

- Such spectacles were comparatively cheap, and therefore suited officials unprepared to invest valuable resources to feed, clothe, and house malefactors for long periods. Those long-term prisoners who did languish in early modern cells had to pay their own way or rely on the material aid of friends and kin.

Suggested Reading

Merrick and Ragan Jr., ed., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France*.

Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring*.

Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Are you surprised to learn that many lawsuits disappeared from the courts before judgment? How does the use of the law by early modern people differ from modern applications?
- 2 Public shaming was a regular means of “correcting” bad behavior during the Renaissance. How does public shaming function in our society?
- 3 Based on what you have learned in other lectures of this course, what other factors besides sexual honesty contributed to an individual’s reputation during the Renaissance?

LECTURE 24

Renaissance Life: Marriage

Marriage—the subject of this lecture—was a complicated business during the period of Europe's Renaissance. Marriage's formation and its parameters were shaped by religious rules, but rules and regulations didn't always account for real life's changing fortunes and circumstances.

Defining Marriages

- During the Renaissance period, rules of marriage were defined by the Christian church, since marriage was designated a sacrament during the Middle Ages. As a result, it was the church's own legal system—governed by canon law—that defined marriage.
- The canons determined who could get married and when and how marriage should take place. There were a number of prohibitions that kept prospective spouses from forming a valid marital union. One was the impediment of age. There was an emphasis on consent to marriage as a prerequisite for its validity, so the threshold was clearly marked: The canonical age of maturity for marriage was 12 for girls and 14 for boys.
- Another prohibition was coercion. Marriages were to be entered into freely by the parties involved. This was complicated, as many individuals besides the prospective spouses themselves had vested interests in matrimonial outcomes. These people could exert considerable pressure.
- Prohibitions also existed for relationships among those connected by blood, by marriage, or by spiritual kinship. Spiritual kinship involved those linked by spiritual affiliation; for example, godparents couldn't marry their godchildren or the parents of their godchildren.
- On the surface, the last of the major prohibitions—precontract—might be the most obvious: People who were already married couldn't get married to anyone else. In reality, though, people could contract themselves in marriage without formalizing or publicizing the union and then later attempt to marry other parties, if affections or material circumstances had altered.
- A number of these barriers were surmountable, especially for those of means. Dispensations could be—and were—acquired to allow for marriage within prohibited degrees. They authorized creative matchmaking for those who needed to avail themselves of clerical authorization for marriage, and many of the results were successful.

- The impediment of age is another example of a barrier that could be negotiated by motivated parents and guardians. The espousal of young children, with the expectation that consent would be demonstrated (or not) once the stipulated age of maturity had been attained, was fairly common at various times and in various places during the Renaissance centuries. For example, Anna Maria Sforza of Milan was betrothed to Alfonso d'Este of Ferrara when both were one year old. The wedding would take place when they were 14.

Constructing Marriage

- Assuming a couple was cleared for marriage, the question remains: How exactly did they go about constructing marriage? There had been much debate on this very issue during the Middle Ages. Two main camps formed, one that advocated for the words of marriage as creating a valid union, and another that argued consummation was necessary as a ratification of marriage.
- The former position carried the day: Under canon law, words made spouses. That decision was shaped by the fact that the most famous couple in Christian history—the Virgin Mary and Joseph—would not have been married at the time of Jesus's birth, should marital intercourse have been a prerequisite.
- The exchange of present-tense vows of marriage—"I take you to be my wife/husband"—created a spiritually and legally binding union. The words had to be present tense, and they were supposed to be exchanged before at least two witnesses with a prior degree of matrimonial publicity and a clerical officiant.
- However, present-tense vows could create indissoluble marriage even when uttered without witnesses, prior promotion of impending nuptials, or a member of the clergy. This led to the possibility of considerable misunderstanding and uncertainty: One partner might allege that the words of marriage had indeed been spoken while the other expressed surprise at such a charge and stated that the required vows had never been exchanged.

- The ecclesiastical courts served as the venue for matrimonial disputes. Great emphasis was given to the exact wording used by both parties involved, since that was the measure of marriage. Witnesses, though, also offered detailed commentary on couples' displays of affection, exchanges of gifts, cohabitation, and a range of other behaviors that kin and neighbors could read as indicators of the seriousness of their relationship.
- While words were the legal marker of matrimony, sex was part of the equation of making marriage, too. Sex was also a factor in ending marriage. Impotency was grounds for an annulment, for example. The granting of annulment allowed for dissolution and remarriage.



The Marriage of Louis de Blois and Marie de France

- A barren marriage could, if one possessed the means, also be undone with official sanction, so important was procreation for a successful marriage.
- Though there were ways out of it, the expectation was that marriage was indeed for life. Modern Western notions of divorce involving the end of a legal marriage didn't exist in the Renaissance. An annulment essentially undid marriage by invalidating its legitimacy.



Unhappy Marriages

- The Protestant Reformation did change marriage in significant ways for the parts of Europe that adopted various reformed traditions, and among those changes were new ideas about how to enter and exit marriage. However, this part of the lecture will focus on some of the strategies designed to address unhappy marriage before the Reformation.
- Because both civil and religious authorities viewed marriage as essential to good order, considerable efforts were made to bring troubled couples back together. Friends, neighbors, and sometimes agents from regulating bodies sought to bring about reconciliation. They might remind a husband, for example, that while some degree of marital discipline was permissible, beating his wife until she was in danger of losing her life was not.
- That kind of intervention sometimes worked, but not always. In those circumstances when a reunion was deemed impossible, ecclesiastical authorities could offer a remedy: separation without the benefit of

remarriage. This was as separation *a mensa et thoro* (“from bed and table”). That freed the parties from the requirements to cohabitate and to engage in intercourse.

- People also developed their own strategies for extracting themselves from relationships no longer palatable, exploiting various loopholes in the processes of marriage formation. An example would be someone suddenly (and conveniently) remembering they had already exchanged matrimonial vows before marrying their current spouse, which was likely a means of achieving the end of a bad marriage while winning the possibility to try again with an alternate partner.
- Keep in mind that marriages could be enduring and affectionate. Considerable evidence suggests that many spouses entered marriage with affection for one another, or that genuine attachment developed over time.

Losing a Partner

- Having multiple successive partners was something many Renaissance people experienced. Early deaths left many husbands and wives behind to grapple with not only whatever emotional loss separation from a spouse entailed but also practical challenges.
- For women much more than men, a spouse's death spelled economic uncertainty, although inheritance offered some widows the freedom to live independently. Both widows and widowers, though, were often motivated to seek new partners to assist with the difficult work of rearing children.

Northwest Marriage Customs

- Since the pioneering work of John Hajnal, scholars have confirmed the existence of two major geographical zones of Europe, each of which had rather distinct matrimonial strategies. These are the northwest and Mediterranean marriage patterns. In the northern and western

portions of Europe—including the British Isles aside from Ireland, Scandinavia, France, and the German-speaking lands—average age at first marriage was the mid- to late 20s for both men and women.

- Money mattered in these northwestern marriages. An important part of the matrimonial process involved the negotiations among friends and families as to responsibilities for provisioning the household and preparing other financial agreements.
- Prospective brides and grooms had means of their own by virtue of employment during their later teens and early 20s. Those years were spent learning a trade or working in another household.
- The nuclear household model marks the northwest, with spouses, their children, and non-kin servants. These household units seldom included multiple extended family members.
- These rather delayed first marriages of the northwest had a number of consequences. First, the gap between the onset of sexual maturity and matrimony meant that premarital sexual activity and accidental pregnancy occurred with regularity. Premarital pregnancy in many instances prompted the formalization of a union that was well on its way to formation. That wasn't always the case, though: Church courts heard plenty of stories from jilted single mothers.
- A second consequence of the delayed age at first marriage was that changing circumstances had plenty of time and opportunity to undo planned-for unions. That probably helped contribute to the fact that many men and women remained unmarried—somewhere between 10 to 15 percent was common, but numbers may have been as high as 25 percent in some areas.
- This reality posed several challenges. Since marriage was the marker of adulthood in early modern Europe, unmarried people occupied an awkward, ill-defined space in the social order.

- A final consequence of the northwest marriage pattern involves the reproductive realities. Because the average gap between pregnancies at the time was about two years, women who married for the first time in their mid-20s had fewer pregnancies before the cessation of their reproductive cycle than women who married younger.

Mediterranean Marriage Customs

- In the Mediterranean marriage pattern, people married younger. In the Italian and Spanish lands as well as eastern and southern Europe, there were two general matrimonial practices.
- In the first, marriage was between two teenagers. The young couples didn't set up their own household. Instead, they lived with one set of in-laws in a multigenerational, or complex, household (as opposed to the nuclear family household in the northwest). In the second common marriage formation strategy, a man in his late 20s or early 30s married a much younger woman.
- The lands in which these marriage practices were in evidence had particularly developed honor culture. That culture emphasized female sexual purity as integral to the formation of male and female reputation, as well as the reputation of extended families. This circumstance might have driven the dynamics of marriage. Early marriage could blunt the opportunities of a young woman to engage in inappropriate relationships that would jeopardize her honor and that of the men responsible for her governance.
- The Mediterranean pattern also emphasized a dowry culture that became crippling in certain areas during the Renaissance. In Florence, for example, inflationary dowries drove many families to place young women in convents rather than deplete family fortunes because the convent was a much more cost-effective alternative. City magistrates even sought to address this endemic dowry crisis in their city-state by creating a dowry fund for poor girls.

Suggested Reading

Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family*.
Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*.
Simons, *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What artistic image or historical couple most memorably represents Renaissance marriage to you?
- 2 Church law emphasized consent as key to matrimonial legitimacy during the Renaissance. How did their concept of consent differ from our modern understanding of the term?
- 3 What ideas about marriage have changed most since the Renaissance?

LECTURE 25

Renaissance Life: Home and Hearth

his lecture looks at food practices across the social spectrum as well as various other aspects of domestic life in Renaissance Europe. It begins with a survey of food culture in Renaissance Europe and then turns to fashion. Finally, the lecture returns to the household to focus on childbirth, childrearing, and servants and retainers.

Diet

- Bread was the core of the European diet during the Renaissance, as it had been in the preceding centuries and would continue to be for centuries to come. It provided a considerable portion of caloric intake.
- The quality of that bread differed based on location and status of the consumer. The wealthy tended to eat more refined wheaten bread, made with sifted flour and consumed while fresh. Those who were poorer in town and country ate bread produced from a mix of grains, prepared infrequently.
- Bread's importance is also demonstrated by its regulation. Ordinances were established throughout the Renaissance to ensure bread's availability and wholesomeness and, frequently, to standardize its production and cost.



- Those of limited means supplemented their diet with mushy porridge made from grains. In certain areas, wheat flour was also transformed into pasta or cracker-like flatbreads. Peasants further augmented their diet with beans, and they also consumed whatever vegetables and other fresh produce were in season. Farm families slaughtered animals in the fall but ate meat much less frequently during the rest of the year.
- The poor often purchased their food, lacking the necessary facilities to produce meals. The types of food retailers were plentiful and varied, catering to different clientele. Cook shops and street vendors specialized in takeaways like hand-pies. Alehouses might have a few simple items of food, but taverns (one step up in the drinking-establishment hierarchy) and inns (yet another step up) offered more options.
- Food preparation processes themselves were fairly uniform throughout Europe: boiling, roasting, and baking were the most common methods, with variants like stewing and poaching also employed. Preservation-oriented techniques, such as smoking, drying, and pickling, were also popular.

Food Customs

- The chronology of daily eating during the early modern period is one still practiced in various parts of Europe and other areas of the world today. The biggest meal of the day came at midday, with a lighter repast coming five to six hours later. For elites, the timeline was a bit different; the noble table was open late, and the final meal of the day might have been at 9:00 pm or later.
- Breaking one's nightly fast is a practice a bit more difficult to track in Renaissance sources and to assign any particular custom to. It does seem that the three-meal idea popular today is likely a more modern invention.
- During Renaissance times, food was believed to impart qualities to its consumer. Moralists considered certain foods fit for certain kinds of people. Delicate birds were suitable for nobility but not peasants, by virtue of their elevation over other animals rooted to the earth.

- Religion powerfully informed food customs and dietary practices. For example, the prohibition against eating meat on certain holy days and during the season of Lent was practiced by all Christians prior to the Reformation and maintained by Roman Catholics afterward.
- The dietary practices of populations on the margins of European society during the Renaissance were also significant. Because both Jews and Muslims were forbidden from consuming pork, food could be used to test those who claimed to have adopted Christianity. The refusal to eat foods banned by a religious tradition, for example, served as evidence of a false conversion.
- Food customs could separate people, then, but they could also bind people together. Enjoying the benefit of someone else's table was a privilege that linked host and guest or dependent. Food could also demonstrate patronage, as servants were fed at their masters' tables.

Clothing

- Food had the dual tasks of nourishing the body and communicating powerful messages about social status and wealth. Clothing, too, had a dual function. It both protected the body from the elements and helped define one's fit in the world of Renaissance Europe.
- Noble and royal women dressed lavishly. Isabella d'Este commissioned a wardrobe for her sister Beatrice's wedding in 1491 that included a richly decorated gold belt and crimson satin. Isabella's style was trendsetting, and she made it clear that money was no object to get the look she wanted.
- Powerful men also devoted considerable care and expense to their clothes. An inventory of Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1492 includes a detailed description of the colors and fabric textures of the Florentine ruler's wardrobe. It communicates a sense of the dizzying array of styles of male gowns, jackets, robes, hats, caps, and hoods.

- In contrast, the general populations of Renaissance lands had functional clothing and fewer outfits. Many people had just two changes of clothing made of robust wools or linens, modestly colored in brown, gray, and russet shades.
- Clothing was cared for and tended to by all. Underclothes—long smocks for women, and shirts and under-breeches for men—were laboriously laundered, as were detachable cuffs and collars. Outer garments included a variety of dress styles women might adopt, depending on their age and condition, and various trouser and jacket styles for men.

Children

- The lecture now turns to family life, starting with children. Childbirth was perilous in the Renaissance and Reformation centuries. Deliveries posed a significant danger to both mother and child. Many women died in childbirth or shortly afterward from fevers that developed from complications, like the failure to expel the placenta. A woman who gave birth five times had a 1 in 20 chance of death, roughly 100 times the likelihood of a woman in the 21st-century United States dying in childbirth.
- The families that were able sent their children out to be wet-nursed. The ripple effects here could be substantial: Entrusting the sustenance and care of a child to another woman who'd recently given birth could imperil the health of the newest edition to the household. The well-being of the wet nurse's own child would also be jeopardized by receiving less than the full complement of its mother's milk.
- The reason for adopting that practice was that the interval between pregnancies was reduced for mothers who didn't breastfeed. For elite families, the production of surviving heirs was paramount, and so the quicker the onset of the next pregnancy, the better.

- Premature deaths for children were high. Some estimates say nearly 25 percent of children died before their first birthday, and another 25 percent died between the ages of 1 and 10. Those deaths came from malnourishment, disease, and accidents, both inside and outside of the home.
- Children who did survive were under women's supervision until the age of 5 or 6. Then, they began to receive training for their lives to come, with subjects and tasks differentiated by gender. Girls were instructed in cooking, sewing, and spinning. Those in the rural environments also took up various agriculture-related activities, and their counterparts in towns and cities learned how to contribute to the family economy in other ways.
- Instructional trajectories for boys had a broader range, very much reflective of status and future occupational opportunities. Boys might be sent away to school, or entered into service or an apprenticeship.

Servants and Retainers

- Royal and noble households featured many individuals not biologically related to one another or to the head of household. Live-in servants and retainers augmented the numbers of these households and served as a sign of prestige.
- Households up and down the social scale adopted this model of introducing others into their domestic-work environments. Many of the tasks they performed were time-intensive and physically onerous. Because wives needed to devote their attention to other activities, it made sense to take in young people, who could be paid limited wages, to do this work.
- Socialization of young people headed toward adulthood was another element of service. Masters were often charged with ensuring the moral and economic well-being of their servants, acting in the place of a parent.

Suggested Reading

Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*.

Rublak, *Dressing Up*.

Stapleford, ed. and trans., *Lorenzo de' Medici at Home*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 In what ways are food and clothing still markers of wealth and status today?
- 2 Can you think of modern equivalents of the sumptuary laws of the Renaissance? What anxieties over material resources shape regulations and laws today?
- 3 What challenges does the study of childhood pose to historians? Do you think children had a Renaissance?

LECTURE 26

Renaissance Faith: Medieval Contexts

his lecture tackles a topic essential to the Renaissance: What was the role of faith in the experience of being human? To help learners understand the questions about faith that Renaissance people asked and the answers they put forward, this lecture begins with a survey of the playing field as the Renaissance began. It also looks at some key figures and events.

A Dispute

- A legendary medieval dispute between the pope and the king illustrates some key points about faith and power that would have spectacular consequences for the Renaissance world. The two contenders were the pope and king. They squared off on both principle and practice.
- The pope held that his authority, as the heir of Saint Peter, was superior to that of any temporal power. As a consequence, he was justified in dictating policy to the crowned heads of Europe and in using his spiritual leadership ensure compliance. The king argued, in contrast, that it was well within his purview as God's anointed ruler to see his subjects as under his authority.
- Our late medieval installment of the conflict featured King Philip IV of France (r. 1285–1314) and Pope Boniface VIII (r. 1294–1303). At issue between the two was a clash between the power principle of old and the financial imperatives of the moment.
- By the late 13th century, monarchs, including Philip IV, were tired of the large group of clerical subjects in their realms whose privileges included exemption from royal taxation and whose ultimate overlord was the Roman pontiff. The royal inability to tax the clergy became increasingly problematic because kings needed money to prosecute their wars.
- Thanks to the commercialization of feudalization, they needed to become increasingly creative about unearthing sources of revenue. That meant turning their attention to the clergy. Both Edward I of England and Philip IV of France, then at war with each other, took bold step of taxing their clerical subjects.
- Pope Boniface VIII was very displeased. He issued the *Clericis Laicos* in 1296 as a command to his wayward royal sheep and to the clergy who'd bowed to temporal power and acquiesced to the kings' demands. Boniface threatened all temporal powers seeking to collect revenues from the clergy and any clergy who paid with excommunication—that is, the denial of the Christian sacraments. He also threatened divine indignation would result.

- Philip persisted in his program of clerical taxation. He also forbade the French clergy from sending revenues to Rome and began to cast aspersions on the pope's faith and personal character.
- Boniface was emboldened in 1302 to issue another decree, even more audacious than its predecessor: *Unam Sanctam*. It drew on scripture in asserting the supreme power of the pope, even claiming that being subject to the Roman pontiff was "absolutely necessary for salvation." Philip responded by authorizing French soldiers to bring the pope to France to stand trial. French troops broke into the pope's apartments in Agnani and held him prisoner for three days.
- This was an incredibly earthly moment for papal authority—a dangerous circumstance for an institution that had spent nearly 1,000 years advancing its claim on otherworldly authority. As a consequence, it serves as a particularly useful backdrop for this lecture's consideration of Christianity at the dawn of the Renaissance. Protests against papal authority won the day in various parts of Europe, while in other areas, a resurgent Roman church provided succor and vibrant leadership.

The Christian Church

- Beginning in the 11th century, the Christian church and its personnel emerged as a powerhouse that fused moral discipline and rectitude with increasing temporal influence. Its remarkable success was predicated on the three legs of a tripod comprised of its Jewish legacy, its Greek-language New Testament, and its interaction with the Roman Empire.
- Under the leadership of Pope Gregory VII in the 11th century, the church adopted a clarity of vision and expectations that made it a juggernaut. It was capable, for example, of commanding the men and materiel of European Christians to reclaim the Holy Land.
- The fervor and piety that helped animate the crusading effort led also to a new quest for better Christian living. Those who felt the traditional holy orders had fallen away from their focus and mission embraced new, more rigorous visions of religious life.

- As one example, Saint Francis of Assisi pioneered an alternate religious lifestyle that assisted the church in catering to the spiritual needs of those who'd flocked to urban areas during the commercial expansion of the central Middle Ages. He created an order devoted to mendicancy and preaching—that is, monks without the cloister, at work in the world.

Tensions

- The quest for personal holiness also led to tension and opposition with clerical authorities. The Frenchman Peter Waldo, for example, had a spiritual trajectory much like that of Saint Francis. Both men came from privileged backgrounds, and both subsequently became passionate advocates of poverty and preaching.
- Waldo and his followers, the Waldensians, didn't ask the church for permission for their activities, and so their urban ministries violated prohibitions against popular preaching. The Waldensians earned the ire of the clerical establishment whose authority they challenged and whose materialism their practices rejected.
- A bigger threat also had its headquarters in France. Adherents—the Albigensians—were named for their point of origin around the town of Albi, but the Albigensians were also called the Cathars, meaning “pure ones.” The Cathars interpreted scripture in a dualist fashion, identifying the God of the Old Testament as an evil deity and the New Testament God as the deity of light.
- The radicalism of their dualist doctrine was a big problem, as was the support offered to Albigensians by powerful aristocrats. Raymond, count of Toulouse, was the most famous example. Raymond wasn't a Cathar himself, but the heresy offered him an attractive opportunity to push back at the expansionist and centralizing efforts of the French crown.
- The Albigensians provoked a series of influential responses from the church. Coming in with an entourage in full clerical splendor was guaranteed to turn the Albigensians off, since they thought the church in error in embracing such worldly trappings. In response to

the criticisms of the Albigensians on the wealth and privilege of the clergy, the Spanish cleric created a new order of friars named after Saint Dominic de Guzman: the Dominicans.

- ⦿ Although the Dominicans became a powerful force within the church, they didn't carry the day with the Albigensians, so Pope Innocent III decided to become violent. Innocent unleashed the weapon of crusade, promising those who took up the cross to fight the heretics the same spiritual and practical benefits enjoyed by those who went to Egypt, Palestine, and points east to fight the Muslims.
- ⦿ For two decades, southern France was a war zone, pitting multiple interpretations of Christianity and their proponents against one another. Innocent also called a crusade to the Holy Land, embroiled the papacy in Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II's battle for the imperial throne against Otto IV and many of the German nobles, threatened King John and England with interdict, and supervised the calling of the Fourth Lateran Council.

The Meaning of Faith

- ⦿ The lecture now turns to an important question: What did it mean to be a Christian in the later Middle Ages? The Christian faith for common people was alive with miracles, reflected the vibrancy of medieval saints' cults, and inspired by the efficacy of relics. The presence of the divine was wrought in the wonders and the terrors of the medieval world.
- ⦿ The officiants of the Christian church promulgated a faith of wonder and awesome power, deeply mysterious and beyond the ability of the untrained to understand. The clergy made themselves the arbiters of salvation and the conduit through which the divine message was revealed.
- ⦿ In their view, common people couldn't be trusted to know their faith without supervision, so the scriptures were to be kept well beyond their reach, safely maintained in the language of the educated—Latin—rather than the vulgar tongue of the people. The vast majority of them

wouldn't have been able to read the vernacular anyway, even had texts been made available to them. Instead, the veneration of saints was promoted, as was the power of relics.

- However, personal devotion proved a difficult thing to control—the popularity of rival, heretical interpretations of faith drives that point home. Also increasingly difficult to control were the great laymen, whose promotion of power directly challenged the authority of the church and its leader, the pope.

Back to Boniface

- The incident at Agnani set off a reaction that cast the church into a prolonged period of division and opened a grave wound at the heart of Christendom. Following hard on the heels of his humiliation at the hands of the French, Boniface died, and the papacy then left Italy for Avignon.
- The papacy became a French commodity, much to the dismay of France's traditional enemy, England. The loss of papal autonomy was decried by many powerful figures who demanded a Roman restoration. That restoration would be attempted with Gregory XI's return to Rome in the 1370s, but the breach was not successfully healed. Instead, two papacies took shape: one in Rome and the other in Avignon.
- For an institution that traced its origins to the Petrine Doctrine, the notion of two men possessing the keys to the kingdom of Heaven was preposterous: How could two men both be the heirs of Saint Peter?
- The situation was untenable and doing inestimable damage to the papacy, and so a church council resolved to fix the problem. A solution was reached in the monumental Council of Constance (1414–1418). It was a vigorous, action-packed council, determined to address the church's flagging popularity and the thorny trouble of a central European heresy in addition to the great papal riddle.

- By that point, there was one papal claimant in Avignon and two in Rome. They were all dismissed and replaced by Martin V. After more than 100 years of exile and schism, one pope ruled in Rome once more. However, the weaknesses the period exposed and their repercussions would haunt the church.

Suggested Reading

Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*.

Hornbeck and Van Dussen, ed., *Europe after Wyclif*.

Ulmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Can you think of other historical examples where spiritual dynamism instead damaged or challenged the faith it seeks to support? How is spiritual dynamism a constructive and destructive force in our own world?
- 2 How would you characterize the later medieval church? Did its weaknesses override its strengths?
- 3 What does the struggle between popes and secular rulers suggest about ideas of power and the exercise of authority that are still unresolved today?

LECTURE 27

Renaissance Faith: The Papacy

he focus on matters of governance, faith, resources, and values that characterized the Renaissance mingled with the aspirations of the papacy. That had both spectacular and devastating effects, as this lecture shows. The lecture begins with Pope Julius II (r. 1503–1513) and then moves on to other case studies.

Julius II

- Like many of his fellow Renaissance popes, Julius II was extraordinarily ambitious. He cowed those who crossed him and got the better of even the great Michelangelo, himself noted for his iron will. The two had spectacular battles, as Julius was a notoriously demanding and uncompromising patron. The most challenging task Julius put before Michelangelo was the decoration of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Julius's payroll included many other Renaissance greats.



🌀 Pope Julius II (1443–1513) 🌀

- Julius wanted a nation-state of his very own, and to get it, he put into place many of the same initiatives that propelled monarchs elsewhere in Europe to new levels of centralization and authority. The Renaissance papacy became more and more creative in meeting its financial needs. This was part of the reason Julius exercised military might in expanding papal claims to the lands of the central Italian Peninsula. The Papal States, over which the pope could exercise direct authority as secular lord, were needed to pay the bills.
- Julius drove Venice out of papal lands, and then he turned his attention to ridding the peninsula of the many foreign rivals who sought to advance their own causes at Italian expense. Julius wouldn't succeed in keeping out the foreign rivals, but he did chalk up victories against challengers in the Papal States. At the time of his death, papal lands stretched from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Context

- To understand how the papacy came to embrace their new goals, context is helpful. The papacy that emerged from the settlement at Constance had some serious work to do. The institution had been tarnished by its perceived partisanship during the pontificate at Avignon (1309–1377) and damaged by the lack of unity the schism (1378–1417) represented. The notion of rival popes undermined the very nature of the papacy as providing leadership in the figure of the one true successor of Peter.
- When the members of the Council of Constance finally resolved the Great Schism in 1417, the man they selected, Martin V (r. 1417–1431), dissolved the council. There was still a nagging sense that the church had significant work to do: to rehabilitate its public image, to refine its doctrine and spiritual practices, and to answer questions about its structure and function.
- The zeal for reform would lose out to dual papal programs shaped by quintessentially Renaissance imperatives. One imperative was to transform Rome into a cultural center, and the other was the drive for territorial conquest.

- Martin embarked on a program meant to prepare Rome for its star turn as Christendom's restored capital. There were many tasks to tend to, since rival condottieri—who needed to be subdued or bargained with—had dominated Rome. Martin was good at that kind of detail work.
- He was also vigorous in his commitment to stamping out heresy. In 1420, he called for a crusade against heretics at a time when the cause was urgent, particularly due to the activities of the Hussite rebels in the Holy Roman Empire.

The Roman Renaissance

- The popes who followed Martin V were the chief architects of the Roman Renaissance. Nicholas V (r. 1447–1455) had a hand in the construction of some of Rome's most famous monuments. He commissioned the building of a new Vatican palace and initiated the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica. The famous Trevi Fountain was reconstructed under his watchful eye as well.
- The most notable of Nicholas's immediate successors was Pope Pius II (r. 1458–1464). He made crusading against the Turks a key initiative during his reign, but with little success. His legacy instead rests on the fusion of his passion for classical scholarship with his appointment as pope. Pius's enthusiasm for the humanist endeavor is evident in his own writing, and it helped to legitimate the Renaissance in Rome.



🌀 Pope Pius II (1405–1464) 🌀

- During the reign of Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471–1484), he, too, would become an active patron of Renaissance artists and scholars. He devoted considerable energies and resources to the Roman facelift begun by his predecessors, commissioning bridges and fortifications, repairing Rome's aqueduct system, and restoring places of worship.

Sixtus's Dark Side

- Sixtus had rather a dark streak as well, starting with nepotism. His family members regularly found preferment; surrounding himself with kin served as a means of enhancing his own power and safeguarding him from challenges. Sixtus elevated a flock of nephews, for example, to the position of cardinal. That included a future pope in Julius II.
- Sixtus's most notorious activity while occupying the papal seat was personally endorsing the Pazzi Plot of 1478 to assassinate Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici. Sixtus harbored resentment against Lorenzo for a series of slights. A series of complex financial settlements and preferments that bound the Pazzi and the Salviati families, the pope's Florentine bankers, led to increasing tensions with the Medici and the origins of the assassination scheme.
- Although Sixtus issued a statement intended to express his personal denunciation of killing by virtue of the holy office he held, it wasn't difficult to read between the lines: The elimination of the Medici would be of great benefit to the papacy and to anyone who could effect that circumstance.
- The plot was a failure. Young Giuliano de' Medici bled to death on the floor of the cathedral, brutally stabbed nineteen times, but his older brother Lorenzo escaped and went on to great power. In their indignation, the people of Florence seized dozens of conspirators, including the head of the Pazzi family, and executed them for their role in the attempted coup.

- Among the victims was Francesco de Salviati, who'd been appointed archbishop of Pisa by Sixtus himself. Sixtus responded by placing Florence under interdict, denying the Florentines the salvific necessity of the Mass. Sixtus was punishing those whose actions challenged his own security and strategies.

Later Popes

- The pontificate of Innocent VIII (r. 1484–1492) followed, most notable perhaps for its coinciding with a revival of interest in the dangers of magic that came to be codified in Inquisitor Heinrich Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum* in 1487. After Innocent's death, the most decadent of all of the Renaissance popes came to power, shortly after the fall of Granada in 1492: the Spaniard Rodrigo de Borgia, or Pope Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503).
- Alexander represents the zenith of papal self-involvement and corruption. The enhancement of the papacy wasn't his primary drive. The ultimate object of his concern was his own family.
- Alexander had no interest in pretending to celibacy or any of the moral niceties attached to the role of pope. His longtime mistress, Vanozza Catanei, enjoyed the informal standing of a queen, and Alexander lavished material attention on their four children. The boys would get land at the expense of the church.
- The most famous, Cesare, was made an archbishop at the age of 17. He would come to serve as an object of fascination for Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince*, thanks to Cesare's ruthless pursuit of Italian empire.
- Alexander made world history with his proposed settlement of Spain and Portugal's conflict over the New World. His granting to Spain of the lion's share of the Americas might have been his most important legacy for the future of the Roman church, given Spanish conquest and missionary efforts to convert the indigenous people.

- Alexander's archrival, Julius II, followed. Julius returned the papal focus to making the Roman Renaissance and to making the Papal States papal again—not the playground of the Borgias or other interlopers.
- A Medici pope then came to power as Leo X (r. 1513–1521). His would be a fateful pontificate, thanks to the challenge of a monk-turned-theology-professor in the northern Holy Roman Empire. The Renaissance had had its day for the papal church, as the Reformation was coming.

Suggested Reading

Dandeleit, *Spanish Rome*.

King, *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What grade would you give the Renaissance papacy, and why?
- 2 Did the Renaissance help or hurt the papal church, on balance?
- 3 Do you think the Renaissance popes deviated from earlier ideals about papal authority, or did they simply update older ideas in their Renaissance environment?

LECTURE 28

Renaissance Faith: Religious Uniformity

he Renaissance represented a rebirth of classical ideals, but it also inherited a medieval tradition of religious antagonism. Christian authorities, both clerical and lay, identified practitioners of alternate faiths and heretical Christians as obstacles to good governance. This lecture continues the course's exploration of the institutional church during the Renaissance. It was attacked and criticized, defensively responding to negative publicity. It was also dynamic, ambitious, and authoritarian, going on the offensive in a partnership with Renaissance nation-states that would have profound influences on the battles of interpretation and power that launched the Reformation.

Problems

- The late Middle Ages represented a medieval nadir for the Christian clerical establishment. The conflict between Pope Boniface VIII and King Philip IV saw the French monarch emerge triumphant and the papacy relocated from Rome to Avignon.
- That Avignon Exile of the church coincided with some of the most catastrophic events of the period. A famine caused massive loss of life, especially in northwest Europe, where agricultural disaster and hunger were joined by animal and human disease. The initiation of the so-called Hundred Years' War in 1337 also occurred when the pope was in exile.
- Moreover, the Black Death ran roughshod over European populations at midcentury. Clerics were stretched thin, and the church had to compromise in the wake of the tidal wave of death. It authorized lay people to hear last confessions. The careful project of reserving that vital role for the clergy lay in ruins.
- A problematic stereotype sunk in, that of the grasping, greedy cleric, offering his services to the highest bidder in the moment of extremis. Between the politicized exile of the papacy and the charges of greed in the clerical ranks, the church wasn't doing well in justifying its purity and elevation above the matters of mere laymen.

Criticism

- People questioned the propriety of the church's leadership and its practices. The medieval conciliarists, of which Italian scholar Marsiglio of Padua (1275–1342) was a leading representative, had argued for the state ascendant over the church and promoted councils as the most effective governing mechanism of the church.
- English theologian Wyclif (d. 1384) offered an even more robust challenge to traditional structures of authority. He invested scripture with the sole power to determine Christian belief. The clergy were mortal men who lacked the ability to develop and enforce their own interpretations of Christian living.

- His patron was John of Gaunt (1340–1399), duke of Lancaster and uncle of the young king Richard II. To Gaunt's delight, Wyclif railed against ecclesiastical wealth and corruption in a way that was well suited to Gaunt's own political agenda. Gaunt sought to secure taxation from the clergy and used Wyclif's diatribes against the church to endorse increased royal control at the expense of clerical autonomy.
- Wyclif's writings incurred much wrath but didn't result in a death sentence for the Oxford theologian. It paid to have friends in high places. Gaunt kept Wyclif free of the church's recriminations, and Wyclif died an old man in 1384.
- His ideas had reached a receptive audience of intellectuals and devout middling-status men and women. These followers were known as Wycliffites or Lollards. Orthodox Christians saw them as a nuisance.

New Policies

- The early reign of Henry IV (r. 1399–1413) saw the implementation of new policies to root out and punish heresy. Convicted heretics would burn for their errors, and the reading of English-language Bibles was forbidden. Gone was the royal support that had safeguarded Wyclif himself.
- In 1414, the Lollards rebelled under the leadership of Sir John Oldcastle. The rebellion was crushed, and many executions for heresy and treason followed. Even Oldcastle himself was eventually arrested and burned at the stake in 1417. Suspected Lollards were targeted following the rebellion. Wyclif himself was retroactively declared a heretic, and his remains were burned.
- Another key figure caused the church considerable dismay with accusations of corruption and error, in both its theology and its leadership. His name was Jan Hus (1369–1415). Hus was a Czech university student when he came into contact with Wycliffite teachings, and he adopted and elaborated on many of the same themes Wyclif had.

- Hus denied papal authority and turned a critical eye on the papal practice of granting indulgences for the remission of sins, declaring such powers beyond the reach of the papacy. Like Wyclif, Hus promoted the reading of the scriptures, encouraging the translation of the Bible into the Czech vernacular.
- Hus's attack struck a chord with the population of Bohemia. They linked his criticisms to their own objections to clerical wealth and privilege and to a nascent nationalism that chafed under the rule of the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire. Hus was eventually summoned to the Council of Constance, where he was interrogated, found guilty of heresy, and burned at the stake.
- His death led to a rebellion in the center of the empire. Hus's supporters, the Hussites, inflicted several defeats on their imperial and papal enemies. The Hussite movement joined with later Protestant sects, so the later Reformation had some powerful, 15th-century antecedents.



🌀 Jan Hus (c. 1370–1415) 🌀

Persecution of Jews

- Another important element to consider regarding the pre-Reformation drive for uniformity involves the history of the persecution of the European Jews. Christianity's troubled relationship with the Jews stretched back to its inception, and sweeping limitations on Jews were codified in the laws of Emperor Constantine. Particularly circumscribed were their activities during the Christian holy week, when animosities ran high as the result of Christians' interpretation that Jesus's death came at the hands of the Jews.

- During the Renaissance, the Jews comprised a tiny fraction of the European population—perhaps one percent. They'd been targeted during episodes of European expansion, as during the Crusades, when Latin Christians traveling eastward to fight enemies of their faith found it troubling that Europe itself housed practitioners of a wrong faith.
- Civil and ecclesiastical regulations required Jews to don special clothing and badges. The Fourth Lateran Council, for example, decreed that Jews wear distinguishing clothing to stave off the possibility of Christians unwittingly entering into a sexual relationship with unrecognized Jews.
- Such regulatory drives othered the Jews, reinforcing their separation—visual, spatial, economic, and religious—from Christians. For example, common legends of Jews breaking into churches to desecrate the host indicated Christian beliefs that the Jews sought to mock the Christian faith.
- These fears took a particularly horrifying shape during the Black Death. Jews in a number of areas of Europe were blamed for spreading the disease, usually through accusations that they poisoned Christian wells. Under duress, some confessed to a wide conspiracy, confirming Christian suspicions and inflaming tensions further.
- The scapegoating of the Jews also took the form of pogroms, particularly in the Holy Roman Empire. Pope Clement VI sought to offer some measure of protection for Jews in Rome, but his pleas failed to extinguish the flames.

Inquisitors

- In addition to the trials imposed upon the Jews, the church had its own judicial trials of faith internally in the form of the Inquisition. Heresy was believed to be so detrimental to the health of the Christian community that the task of investigating it was the responsibility of Christian bishops. After the Albigensian challenge of the 13th century, new, more rigorous mechanisms were called upon to bolster the ecclesiastical processes.

- Joining the investigative team were inquisitors, mostly drawn from the newly formed Dominican and Franciscan friars. These men were animated by piety and under the supervision of the papacy. They quickly earned a reputation for their commitment to the hunt.
- The Inquisition didn't have to follow any legal niceties in their acquisition of evidence or their treatment of the accused. Having been granted vast authority, inquisitors left no stone unturned to discover and uproot heresy. The use of torture and the acceptance of secret testimony were excused on the grounds that the consequences of failure were severe and could endanger God's kingdom.
- Not all inquisitors were rabidly devoted to excessive justice, but neither were they always well regarded by their fellow clerics. Signs of their unpopularity demonstrate clerical turf wars with bishops and disputes with temporal lords over the matters of authority.



- The Inquisition took on a different cast when states were able to gain papal permission for oversight, as with Spanish rulers Ferdinand and Isabella's own efforts to investigate secret Jews and Muslims.
- Heresies could take a nearly infinite number of forms. Inquisitors such as Heinrich Kramer, for instance, made accusations of witchcraft a focus of their attention. Threats to Christianity came from everywhere in Renaissance Europe—or so it seemed. The impulse to quash these threats was increasingly fervent and brutal.

Suggested Reading

Rex, *The Lollards*.

Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich*.

Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What similarities and differences exist between Renaissance and modern states in their approach to matters of private faith?
- 2 The medieval and Renaissance Jews were often made religious refugees by the policies of governing bodies. How does your sense of their situation match or deviate from religious refugees in our times?

LECTURE 29

Luther: Breaking the Christian Consensus



his lecture considers the coming of the Reformation and its connections with the Renaissance. The Renaissance papacy's thirst for ostentation and the costs of patronage pushed the cash-strapped church into what critics considered the salvation-for-sale business. The situation was another sign that all wasn't well in the church that reformer Martin Luther came to challenge.

Two Insiders

- The political power plays of the papacy, the eroding of the clergy's standing by the Black Death, and the draconian push for conformity in the Inquisition helped build the pyre for a conflagration of backlash against the church. The fire itself was lit, unwittingly, by a pair of insiders.
- One was a Dominican friar by the name of Johan Tetzel. He'd been authorized to promote the attractions and efficacy of a plenary indulgence offered by Pope Leo X (r. 1513–1521). Tetzel, who had a particular flair for salesmanship, went all out.
- Tetzel's was a seductive message: For a modest fee, the living could offer priceless assistance to those who'd passed beyond mortal aid. According to Tetzel, it was the pope's power and beneficence in offering indulgences that could ease the grave suffering of loved ones, plagued by the torments of being stuck in purgatory.
- An important Augustinian monk-turned-theologian wasn't impressed. When his parishioners came to him with news of their purchases and reports of Tetzel's teaching, the second insider, Martin Luther, was deeply troubled by what he heard.

The Ninety-Five Theses

- Martin Luther approached his apprehensions about Tetzel's message as a good academic: He conducted research, initiating a comprehensive review of the church's teachings on indulgences during the summer of 1517. He found his uneasiness growing.
- By late October, he'd organized his thoughts into his Ninety-Five Theses. Luther's main objection to the current practice of indulgences centered on his understanding of sin and penance as lifelong processes of Christian living. Seen through that lens, forgiveness wasn't something that could be acquired as an event, nor was the remission of the penalties of sin something that was completed on behalf those already in purgatory.



🌀 Martin Luther (1483–1546) 🌀

- Luther doesn't actually refute indulgences in the theses, although he questions their operation. Note that Luther didn't understand the complicated mechanisms behind this plenary indulgence: the beautification of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome commanded vast sums, so the indulgence was designed to help underwrite the continuing Roman Renaissance.

- There was also the matter of the Hohenzollern debt: To secure Albrecht von Hohenzollern's appointment as archbishop of Mainz, the family had taken out a huge loan of 10,000 ducats. They already owed back payments on the debt undertaken for Albrecht's previous appointment as Bishop of Magdeburg.
- The profits from the indulgence were supposed to pay off papal debt. Writing in outrage over the abuses he saw with this indulgence-based revenue scheme wasn't Luther's smartest move. However, he hoped his theses—written in Latin to target an audience of learned men—would initiate a scholarly debate on the current theology and practice of indulgences.
- It is not particularly significant that Luther's theses ended up posted on the doors of Castle Church in Wittenberg, which had a history of serving as a public bulletin board. More interesting is this line from Luther: "Therefore he asks that those who cannot be present and dispute with him orally shall do so in their absence by letter."
- With those words, Luther suggests that his document will come to the attention of others, presumably those at some distance from Wittenberg and so unable to participate in the anticipated disputation in person. That hints at the wider distribution of his writings and puts Luther and this indulgence controversy at the center of an informational revolution that would play a key role in what followed.

A Massive Shift

- Weeks after the theses were produced, they were translated from the academic language of Latin into the German vernacular and printed. The conditions of Luther's world, that of that Renaissance, were absolutely vital to how he was able to take on the church, initiating a protest movement that put an end to more than a thousand years of Christian consensus.
- The Ninety-Five Theses were just the start of Luther's activities. Luther's study of Paul's Letter to the Romans provided the release of a lifetime's tension and frustration concerning the earning of salvation. Luther's

interpretation of scripture led him to reject the notion of salvation as a thing earned, as the church taught. He concluded that those who had faith would be saved by it.

- Faith alone—as an unearned gift of God’s grace—was the recipe for salvation. The purchase of indulgences or empty performances of acts of charity were not. That kind of talk received the attention of the church, as did Luther’s challenging of papal infallibility in the Leipzig Disputation with Johan Eck in 1519.
- The year 1520 saw the publication of treatises in which Luther opened the floodgates of criticism against the form, function, theology, and leadership of the church. In *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, Luther called on the German princes to reject the foreign Roman overlord and take control of their own churches.
- *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* took on the sacramental structure of the church, using the title to conjure up the Old Testament idea of faith held hostage. In it, Luther dismisses five of the traditional seven sacraments, leaving only baptism and the Eucharist as true sacraments necessary for the believer.
- By the spring of 1521, when he was summoned to an imperial diet in Worms to answer for his teachings, Luther was no stranger to controversy. Luther had mocked the previous papal denunciations against him. He’d burned the edict that demanded his recantation under the threat of excommunication in late 1520; predictably, he refused to recant and so was excommunicated in January of 1521. In May of 1521, the diet banned Luther’s work and called for his detention as an outlaw.

Luther’s Impact

- The treatises of 1520 were only part of Luther’s oeuvre. He wrote and published theological exegeses. He also wrote and published a German translation of the Bible, as well as sermons. Those able to read could come into direct contact with the reformer’s teachings via print.

- Another factor in the popular educational element was the Lutheran soundtrack. Luther had a passion for music and understood the power of lyrics and tunes to communicate powerful messages. Hymn singing became a key means of teaching. Luther himself authored numerous hymns, helping produce the first Lutheran hymnal, published in 1524.
- Luther also had powerful friends, including his patron and protector, Elector Frederick of Saxony. After Luther's branding as an outlaw, Frederick had men disguised as bandits apprehend Luther as he was traveling from Worms. They were friends, not foes, and they took Luther into protective custody.
- For nearly two years, Luther called Wartburg Castle home, writing, refining his arguments, and producing his German-language Bible. He was also evading the fiery end that likely would have awaited him, had he fallen into the wrong hands.
- Luther's exhortations to lay leaders to take control over their churches would earn him a number of princely supporters. He authorized attitudes and ideas they had long cherished themselves.
- Although Luther himself wasn't a humanist, many humanists were enthusiastic about Luther's challenge to the papacy and to the hypocrisies of the clergy—at least initially. In Luther, they thought they'd found an ally, someone who saw the need to expose the corruption and decay of the clerical establishment in order to bring about their much-desired Christian Renaissance.
- Luther was in communication with several of them, including the notable Erasmus (1466–1536). For a time, a vibrant, productive exchange helped promote and sustain Luther's cause. However, Luther's challenge began to take on a decidedly more separatist cast. As it became clear that he was calling not for the restoration of the one church but a new church, many of the humanists fell away from him.

- He even lost his pen pal Erasmus in a rupture over divergent interpretations on the issue of free will. Still, the network of northern humanists had served as an early and useful means of elevating an imperial religious problem into a much broader setting. The beast of reform was loose.

Suggested Reading

Eire, *Reformations*.

Pettegree, *Brand Luther*.

Scribner and Dixon, *The German Reformation*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Was Luther's success more the product of the weakness of the institutional church or of the strength of his own message?
- 2 What elements in Luther's teachings would have appealed to the different status groups of 16th-century Europe?
- 3 Luther's Reformation thrived in part thanks to a media revolution that took advantage of new technologies available in Renaissance Europe. How have recent developments in technology and social media changed the exchange of information in our time?

LECTURE 30

Radical Reform in Renaissance Europe



The previous lecture examined the deep fissure that Luther's new ideas, propagated in very Renaissance ways, opened in the foundations of the European Catholic establishment. This lecture considers the many fractures that grew from and deepened that break in ways that Luther couldn't foresee or control. Reform took on a new, institutional emphasis of its own as the challengers of the papal church sought to codify and define their beliefs.

The Anabaptists

- This lecture begins with the Anabaptists, who harbored what contemporaries considered particularly dangerous ideas. They believed that entrance into the faith community was something that required a fully conscious commitment. An infant couldn't undertake that. That's why they advocated the practice of adult baptism.
- That was enough to earn the ire of other Christians, who rejected vigorously the suggestion the sacrament of baptism could be validated by human will. That dangerous idea, they believed, undermined the power of God, the chief agent of the ceremony.
- The Anabaptists' most radical fringe was a group that seized control of the imperial city of Münster in Westphalia early in 1534 to establish their New Jerusalem. Among those who settled in Münster was Jan of Leiden (1509–1536), an import from the Low Countries, a former apprentice tailor, and the illegitimate son of a magistrate.
- Jan and his cohort engineered a coup in the municipal elections in February 1534, replacing the more conservative elites with a crowd of the laboring classes. The displaced former bishop of Münster, Franz von Waldeck (1491–1553), began gathering recruits from both Catholic and Protestant factions to take back the city. The besieging army took the Anabaptists down.
- Leadership of the city fell to Jan of Leiden, who wasted no time in identifying himself as the new prophet. His objectives included the restoration of the Old Testament of polygamy. Under his leadership, the city held out for months, until the arrival of Philip, Margrave of Hesse (1504–1567).
- The city was taken in June 1535. The remaining defenders were slaughtered, and the leaders were made a gruesome example of. King Jan was paraded throughout northern imperial lands, then tortured and executed. His corpse was placed in an iron cage hanging from the steeple of St. Lambert's Church to rot and to remind others of the penalty of fanaticism.

- The tale of the Anabaptists of Münster elucidates how complicated and messy the process of Reformation became. As it grew in momentum, the Reformation bumped up against a host of ideas and systems with which it had to negotiate.

The Common Man

- Luther's exposure of what he identified as the hypocrisy of the clergy was relentless. It was through his anticlericalism that Luther inadvertently hit on the thing that would make his ideas most relevant to the common man: In German-speaking lands, the common man was typically a dependent.
- Some owed their lords various dues and fees for the land they worked but didn't own. Others fell into the category of serf. They were also required to pay dues and fees, but with the added requirement of labor services as well. The strain of meeting various exactions to the lords grew increasingly burdensome and resented across the 15th century.
- Another strain came from the due and fees agriculturalists owed to the church. The tithe—the gift of thanks for God's bounty—was traditionally established at 10 percent. That had grown burdensome as well, comprised of a trio of tithes: one on the grain harvest and wine, one on fruit and vegetables, and one on animals.
- It didn't matter if a farmer had a bad harvest or an animal blight carried away livestock. The demands were relentless. All of these pressures contributed to lower orders harboring mutinous sentiments toward the clergy.

Rebellions

- Peasant rebellions had dotted the timeline of the 14th and 15th centuries in reaction to the aforementioned conditions. These risings were crushed, but the impulses that drove the frustrated peasants to rebel only grew.

- The early decades of the 16th century in the Holy Roman Empire had been host to widespread misery and hunger sparked by years of bad harvests, and tensions festered. That was the environment into which Luther's calls for reform were unleashed. It sparked the greatest peasant rebellion of them all: the German Peasants' War.
- The conflict played out across 1524 and 1525. The rebels were inspired by Luther and brimming with a variety of economic, political, and religious grievances. They wanted to be able to appoint their own clerical leadership, not have it imposed upon them from above. They also wanted relief from abuses in the imposition and collection of tithes. Each of these speaks directly to their anticlericalism.
- As the rebellion spread, urban have-nots joined agricultural rebels; disturbances and grievances were not confined to the rural environment. The conflict took on the characteristics of a class war.
- The rebels were dangerous, but lacked coordination. Despite attempts by some of the rebel commanders to network with other forces, they failed to operationalize a plan for unifying the tens of thousands of men who took up arms as rebels. That, combined with changing circumstances in the Empire's own military agenda and resources, was ultimately the cause of their undoing.

Peasant Radicalism

- Peasant radicalism set in under the leadership of figures such as Thomas Muntzer (1490–1525) and Heinrich Pfeiffer. The rebels targeted their enemies with acts of spectacular violence: burning, looting, and pillaging. They destroyed castles, churches, and monasteries and subjected their inhabitants to frontier-style justice. Luther viewed these rebels as the enemies of God and man. He called them “highwaymen and murders” and called for their deaths.

- A cleanup operation began. The forces of the League of Swabia had already dealt with recalcitrant rebels in the Knights' Revolt of 1523–1524, led by humanist knight Ulrich von Hutton (1488–1523) and Franz von Sickingen (1481–1523). They beat back the forces of that revolt one target at a time.
- It employed the same methodical strategy in dismembering the peasants' cause as well. The league's forces were bolstered by the return from Italy of imperial troops, following the Habsburg victory at Pavia in 1525 against the French. The human cost of the Peasants' War was enormous. Estimates of the rebel dead vary widely, ranging from 75,000 to 150,000.

After Rebellion

- After the destruction of the peasant rebellion, the fires of religious passion were mediated through the practical problem of the Reformation's survival in the Empire. Hostile forces were seeking the revocation of reform altogether.
- The attempts were initially ineffectual. A trio of Imperial Diets at Nuremberg in the early 1520s, presided over by Charles V's brother Archduke Ferdinand (1503–1564), failed to act conclusively to crush Luther's movement. The imperial agenda was crowded, with the struggle with France in Italy in full swing and the resurgent Ottoman armies on the move in the east and the Mediterranean.
- In 1526, the imperial estates convened at Speyer, where concessions had to be made to the evangelicals. Until a much-desired church council could be called to address the matter of reform, Ferdinand was forced to proclaim what amounted to a compromise with those lands and leaders who'd embraced the cause of reform.
- Matters of greater importance demanded unified action: Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566) was poised to drive into the middle of Europe, and the Diet turned its focus to stopping him. They failed.

- In August 1526, the Ottomans achieved a smashing victory at Mohács against the Hungarian king Louis in a battle that shook Christians throughout Europe, but nowhere more so than in the obviously vulnerable Holy Roman Empire. The Ottomans halted their advance, but the threat they posed didn't allow the Holy Roman Empire to check the spread of Luther's message.
- The ongoing Italian agenda absorbed the emperor's own energies. The sack of Rome by disgruntled imperial troops in 1527 was both an embarrassment and an opportunity. Charles pressured Pope Clement VII (r. 1523–1534), extorting advantages on the peninsula and abroad.
- When the Diet met next in 1529, the tide had turned against the princes who'd embraced Luther's cause. They were outvoted in the revocation of 1526's conciliatory position toward evangelicalism, leading them to a formal protest. That, incidentally, is the origin of the Protestant label, with the April 1529 objection to the Diet's ruling on evangelicalism.

Attempts at Reconciliation

- Given the deteriorating relationship between the evangelicals and their opponents, leading evangelical Margrave Philip of Hesse invited German reformers to join reformers from the Swiss cantons at Marburg. The hope was to achieve a unified theological front.
- The conference's attendees included Luther, his associate Philip Melancthon, and first-generation Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli. While they found much common ground, they couldn't see eye to eye on the Eucharist. That most cherished of sacraments would prove a point of controversy time and again among the emerging Protestant groups.
- After a failed attempt to create a confession of faith that would win over the emperor—the Augsburg Confession of 1530—and the formation of a military alliance of Protestant princes and magistrates for mutual defense—the Schmalkaldic League—civil war in the Empire over the matter of faith seemed imminent.

Luther's Views

- The dynamism of protest that Luther's challenge unleashed against the church didn't actually translate much into other areas of his thinking and writing. For instance, though he later decried the more violent actors in the peasant rebellion, his earlier *Admonition to Peace* struck a conciliatory tone. It was drowned out by the subsequent thundering denunciation of the peasants who thought their actions were in keeping with Luther's own platform for change.
- Luther's relationship with the status quo was a complex one. He wasn't a slave to the approval of princes, but he did believe that authority ought to be obeyed. That can be hard to square, given the events he helped unleash, but this helps: He supported a clear distinction between spiritual and secular authority. Luther deferred to secular authorities on secular matters, but on spiritual matters, he owed his obedience to God.
- As for another matter, a range of interpretations of Luther on the subject of women exists. That's because Luther's writings at various points and in various circumstances support a variety of positions, as can the Christian scriptures themselves. Some of Luther's comments about women read as perplexingly backward today, but they were in keeping with contemporary views on women's limitations.
- Many have found Luther's comments on the Jews far more troubling and troublesome. Perhaps most famously, they've been linked to the sinister legacy of German anti-Semitism in the 20th century. The most controversial is the text *On the Jews and Their Lies*, published in 1543.
- Luther had commented on the Jews throughout his authorial career. Early on, he called upon the Jews to convert. However, by 1543, he'd become deeply embittered by their rejection, both of himself and of Christianity. He unleashed his frustration in a diatribe that rehearses centuries of urban legends propagated against the Jews.

- He prescribed a seven-step plan to break the Jews. They would, in Luther's frightening vision, be subject to loss by fire of their schools and synagogues and homes to demonstrate "that they are living in exile and in captivity." This text serves as a reminder to be wary of embracing any easy characterizations of Luther. He's a figure that resists easy demonization or lionization.

Suggested Reading

Goertz, *The Anabaptists*.

Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, ed., *Luther on Women*.

Stayer, *The German Peasants' War and the Anabaptist Community of Goods*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Can you think of examples of protest being peacefully managed or controlled, or does the act of protest imply disorder?
- 2 Would Holy Roman Emperor Charles V had have the power to put a conclusive end to the Reformation, had he not been devoting his energies to initiatives against the French and the Turks?
- 3 Was the Reformation in the Empire inevitable? Why or why not?

LECTURE 31

Renaissance and Reformation: Connections

he Renaissance was a powerful impetus for the Reformation, particularly the types of reform that originated in the Swiss lands. These movements found early traction in urban areas, which also happened to be centers of commerce and learning. Their appeal, though, spread their ideas far beyond Swiss borders, where they often adopted a form of militancy that resulted in conflict and dissension.

Huldrych Zwingli

- At nearly the same moment Martin Luther began to publicly question the theological efficacy of indulgences and the power of the papacy to grant salvation, another reformer launched his own assault on the institutional church, even becoming embroiled in his own indulgence controversy. His name was Huldrych Zwingli, and he was born in the Swiss canton of Glarus.
- Though he was not drawn from the elite class, Zwingli did receive training in Latin and grammar under the tutelage of a clerical uncle and then at a school in Bern before enrolling at the University of Vienna. There, the Northern Renaissance was in bloom, with well-regarded humanists such as Conrad Celtis (1459–1508) on the faculty.



❧ Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) ❧

- It was in Vienna that Zwingli first embraced the study of the classics and developed his rather prodigious talent for music. Zwingli spent four years in Vienna before becoming a transfer student, continuing his education at the University of Basel.
- He was eventually ordained as a priest. He wanted to return to Glarus to become his hometown's parish priest, but an alternate candidate had already been approved and appointed by the clerical hierarchy. Zwingli bribed his rival to dissuade him from accepting the post.
- Zwingli settled nicely into his post, becoming a dutiful clerical shepherd minding his pastoral flock. However, the lure of Christian humanism beckoned. Zwingli devoted himself to the study of the Bible, the church fathers, and the classics. He turned a critical eye on the contemporary church, whose laxity and corruption deviated from the ancient Christian vision. He singled out as particular targets pilgrimage and indulgences.
- An opportunity for career advancement opened in 1518, when the position of cathedral priest at the Great Minster of Zurich fell vacant. Zwingli set his cap on winning the job but found himself battling rumors of moral laxity: He was charged with impregnating a parishioner while rector of the monastic church in Einsiedeln, and his devotion to his music earned him the label of "frivolous."
- Zwingli defended himself with great vigor. The selection committee responded favorably to Zwingli's appeal and named him to the job. Zwingli quickly earned the admiration and devotion of the people of Zurich, and their support would prove vital to Zwingli's initiation of reform.

Affair of the Sausages

- Zwingli's background leads to 1522's Affair of the Sausages. A group gathered at the home of printer Christoph Froschauer, where the host served sausages. Several of the assembled party, which included Zwingli, ate the sausages, a clear violation of the requirement to abstain from the eating of meat during Lent.

- Zwingli didn't partake of the sausages himself, but he jumped to the defense of those who did. His resulting sermon endorsed the position that each individual Christian can fast or eat, according to his own decision. He also called out the hypocrisy of behaving one way during lent as license to behave however one wished the rest of the year.
- While civic authorities who considered the matter upheld the practice of the fast, they did open the door for more substantive debate on matters of faith. That allowed Zwingli to present a list of objections to contemporary theology and practice.
- He railed against clerical celibacy, and he objected to idolatry. Zwingli also commented on the Eucharist. He held it to be a commemorative ceremony, denying the real presence of Jesus in body, blood, or spirit.

Opposition

- Zwingli's actions in Zurich, shaped in various ways by the influence of humanist thought, received the stamp of approval from the urban elite who governed the city. However, not all applications of humanist methods and ideas resulted in a successful partnership between spiritual and secular leaders.
- One of the problems stemmed from an issue at the heart of all calls for reform that emphasized a return *ad fontes* ("to the sources"). In this context, that meant going back classical Christian texts. When people studied the Bible for themselves, they formed their own interpretations about what they'd read.
- The path of individual discovery of truth and knowledge was a revered principle of Renaissance humanist learning. However, the medieval church had made it a point to provide its approved interpretation for all. The church would identify knowledge and disseminate it.
- The emphasis on reading the Bible put forward by early reformers, many of them influenced by humanist education, quickly exposed the dangers of the democratization of interpretation. For example, in Zurich, a well-

born humanist named Conrad Grebel (1498–1526) found himself at the center of controversy for promoting scriptural evidence of a point that would become abhorrent to both Catholics and Protestants alike.

- Grebel was part of a reading group that dedicated itself to the close study of scripture. On the subject of baptism, the group believed it had made a significant breakthrough in concluding that scriptural evidence did not support the efficacy of infant baptism. They pointed to Christ's own baptism, as an adult, by John the Baptist as irrefutable proof of the ceremony's value for those capable of entering the faith community of their own volition, not for babies.
- Grebel and his group were outlawed from Zurich for performing and participating in public adult baptisms, a practice that the city fathers made punishable by death under the grounds of old Roman law. As a consequence, re-baptizers were arrested and burned at the stake or drowned. Similar ideas to Grebel's spread nonetheless.

A New Generation

- The lecture now turns to the influence of the new learning on the most significant of the reformers in the second generation after Luther and Zwingli. That would be the Frenchman Jean Cauvin (1509–1564), better known as John Calvin. Enamored with humanist learning, Calvin pursued Greek, Hebrew, and Latin learning in Paris, producing a tract on the writings of Roman Stoic Seneca in 1532.
- Calvin eventually converted to Protestantism. Protestant persecution erupted in Paris, particularly after October 1534's Affair of the Placards. Protestant slogans had been posted throughout the city and even on the door of the royal bedchamber, igniting a wave of suppression.
- Calvin fled, finding shelter with the reformers Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito, and settling in Basel. There, he published his magisterial *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the book he would continue to revise throughout the remainder of his life. At the time, he was 26 years old.

- In *The Institutes*, he advanced the doctrines that would be the hallmarks of the movement that bears his name: the majesty of God and the gift of God's mercy, which extended to the selection of the saved and the damned. That reality—double predestination—freed the believer from needless worry over salvation.
- Calvin eventually ended up in Geneva. With the support of the magistrates there, Calvin would take up the cause that would dominate the remainder of his life: the establishment of a purely reformed city, ruled by discipline and the elect.
- The instrument through which discipline was secured was the Consistory. That old question of which authority—spiritual or civil—would enforce morality was solved in the Consistory, whose members were drawn from both: it was staffed by church elders and pastors, and under the leadership of the city's Small Council. The harshness of the Consistory's judgments—exile and execution for adultery, for example—sometimes obscures the body's attempts at social reform.
- Calvin's thought was careful and systematic, even when his actions could appear dogmatic and intolerant. His commitment to organized education is best symbolized by the establishment of the Genevan Academy in 1559. There, students were educated, free of personal expense, in the liberal arts and theology. The Genevan Academy, under the supervision of the talented Theodore Beza, produced men who helped spread Calvinism throughout Europe.

Scotland

- In Scotland, the Reformation possessed some of the same features as the stories of Zwingli and Calvin: an inspired and inspiring spiritual leader, working in tandem with powerful men, enacting religious change. However, the Scottish Reformation would also involve a power play that toppled a monarch from the throne.

- On one side was the fiery preacher John Knox, who possessed a steely determination to see God's church purely reformed. He was, by turns, a slave, a warrior, a diplomat, a best-selling misogynist author, and a historian, to highlight just a few of his many activities and identities.
- Knox had found himself on the wrong side of the law in the 1540s. He was in Scotland, at the time managed by the French regent for the young Mary, queen of Scots (1543–1587). The regent was her mother, Marie de Guise (1515–1560).
- Knox's embracing of Protestant sympathies and his role as chaplain for the group of assassins of Cardinal David Beaton (1494–1546) resulted in his capture and two-year imprisonment as a galley slave. After his release, Knox turned in exile first to England and then to the Continent, where his travels included Calvin's Geneva.
- Knox took up many tasks in Geneva, including the authoring of a 1558 pamphlet questioning female authority, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. It railed against the right of women to exercise political authority, although its awkwardly timed publication coincided with Elizabeth Tudor's ascension to the throne of England.



John Knox (1513–1572)

- Sensing the moment was ripe for his return to the land of his birth, Knox traveled to Scotland in 1559. The failure of the French to secure the regency of Marie de Guise and then her sudden death in 1560 offered Knox and the growing Protestant faction opportunity to strike.

Knox in Power

- Reformation would be made by Scotland's parliament, under the leadership of its leading aristocrats. Many of them saw reform as a way to drive a wedge between Scotland and France, finally freeing the former from the designs of the latter. The Protestant Lords of the Congregation guided a reform agenda through a parliament that in three weeks abolished the power of the papacy in Scotland, forbade the saying of the Mass, and annulled all acts protecting the old church, although not dismantling its structure.
- It authorized Knox and other clerical leaders to organize the form and function of a new national Scottish church, the Kirk. The group, influenced by Calvin's Geneva and under Knox's guidance, produced the *First Book of Discipline*, outlining autonomous congregations. It would be a church of simplicity and morality, enforced through discipline.
- The young Scottish queen returned after having suffered the dual blows of losing both her husband, Francois II, and her mother in short order. She'd grown up at the French court and found herself a stranger in her own land, challenged by Knox and a Protestant elite faction solidly in the ascendancy.
- Mary and Knox clashed over the issue of her personal religion; she didn't do much to revive the Catholic cause in Scotland on her return, but she had maintained her own Catholic worship and demanded that she and her servants remain unmolested for their faith practices. She had a set of four personal interviews with Knox, all of them varying degrees of disastrous.

- Mary's perceived moral lapses, including potential complicity in the murder of her second husband, Lord Darnley (1545–1567), and her marriage to the leading conspirator of the assassination plot, the earl of Bothwell (1534–1578), cost Mary the support of her people and her crown. Her flight to England in 1568 would initiate a 19-year captivity. It also allowed the Protestant Lords to further reform their state and their church, thanks to the long regency of Mary's son, James VI (r. 1568–1625), who was raised Protestant.
- Here in Scotland was a reformed tradition imposed from above, at least theoretically organized around religious imperatives but deeply influenced by political circumstances. The partnership would have profound consequences for the history of Europe.

Suggested Reading

Bashera, Gordon, and Moser, eds., *Following Zwingli*.

Gordon, *Calvin*.

Ryrie, *The Origins of the Scottish Reformation*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Do you agree with the assessment of Zwingli as a Renaissance man? How has that concept evolved since its exploration earlier in the course?
- 2 Why do you think powerful connections existed between education and activism in the 16th century?
- 3 How do the case studies of Zurich, Geneva, and the Scottish Reformation indicate a renegotiation of the relationship between political and religious authority?

LECTURE 32

English Reformation

his lecture considers the causes, processes, and consequences of the Tudor reforms. The Tudors were a new dynasty founded by Henry VII, who is the first focus of the lecture. The lecture then turns to his successors and the ways they grappled with religion in England.

The Rule of Henry VII

- Henry VII came to the throne at the end of the 15th century's Wars of the Roses and so needed to prioritize his legitimacy and to create stability for his troubled realm. That meant a strategic marriage for the new king himself; he took as his bride the daughter of the most successful Yorkish king to rule England. It also meant strategic marriages, when the time came, for the four of his children who survived to adolescence.
- The condition of Henry VII's England posed significant challenges for its new monarch. There were rival claimants, who were exposed as frauds or imprisoned and executed as legitimate threats. There were also pesky aristocrats, whose independence was largely defused through legal and political maneuvering.
- However, Henry VII wasn't faced with a kingdom of subjects clamoring for religious change. The lack of religious dissent must have been a relief.
- Henry VII was a successful king, but a personal and dynastic loss threatened to undo his carefully constructed succession and alliance program: His oldest son, Arthur, died in 1502, just months after his marriage to Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon.
- Ultimately, the king opted for a plan to the Spanish alliance: He substituted one brother groom for another. Henry's second son and namesake found himself stepping into his brother's spousal shoes. The younger Henry, who'd rule as Henry VIII, was just a boy when Arthur died.

The Rule of Henry VIII

- Henry VIII's court posed a marked contrast to that of his father. It was full of youth, vigor, laughter, and splendor. Gone was the austerity of the first Tudor king's final years, replaced by young, companion spouses, content with one another and hopeful for a bright future.
- That brightness dimmed, though, as the years advanced and the union failed to produce a surviving male heir. The need for a son fused with Henry's growing desire for Anne Boleyn. Anne was seriously



☞ Henry VIII (1491–1547) ☞

romantically entangled with another man: Henry Percy, son of the earl of Northumberland. The relationship had even advanced to a promise of marriage, but the young couple's hopes were dashed.

- Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (1473–1530), whose meteoric rise to and exercise of power earned the ire of many of England's greatest subjects, often treated the aristocrats as chess pieces to be positioned on his own game board. He scuttled Anne's love affair for political purposes.
- That cleared the king's path to her, but to Henry's consternation, he found his advances to Anne continually rebuffed. She made it clear she would not be a royal mistress, to be used and discarded. She instead held out for the ultimate prize: She wanted the royal diadem on her head.



❧ Anne Boleyn (1507?–1536) ❧

- Anne's coyness only deepened Henry's desire, so drastic action was needed. The king needed to break from his wife. Divorce—a sundering of valid marriage that freed both parties to undertake a second match—was not an option. Henry instead needed annulment—that is, a declaration that the marriage was invalid from its inception.

Seeking Annulment

- Henry put Wolsey, his most trusted and effective servant, on the job, and the cardinal was charged with convincing Rome to fulfill the king's wishes. The pope, Clement VII, faced two issues. One was that an earlier papal dispensation that had been required to pave the way for Henry and Catherine's marriage. An annulment that invalidated that earlier permission would undermine the papacy's authority.
- Even more problematic was the geopolitical condition the pope faced in Rome. The city was occupied by the troops of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (r. 1519–1555), who happened to be Catherine of Aragon's nephew. Charles wasn't keen on Catherine being depicted as a woman who'd occupied the king's bed for two decades without valid marriage, nor was he about to allow his cousin Mary to be declared illegitimate.
- In response, Clement stalled. He frustrated Wolsey to desperation. The inability to secure the king's annulment actually cost Wolsey his credibility with the king, and he died in disgrace. Henry's papal avenue to freedom choked off by Clement's prevarications, a more radical course of action was decided upon.

Breaking with Rome

- With his advisors, including Thomas Cromwell (1485–1540), Henry undertook the divisive move of breaking with Rome. If Rome couldn't bend to his wishes, Henry would remove Rome from the equation.
- The key was not to make Henry appear despotic, unmanned by his passion for a woman. He needed some indication that in separating from papal authority, he was actually acting on the wishes of his subjects. Despite its aristocratic makeup, Parliament was the best avenue Henry had available for that goal.
- Between 1529 and 1536, Parliament rewrote the rules of religion and authority in England. Statute law replaced the pope as leader of the church with the king. Catherine's union to Henry was invalidated, freeing the king to marry Anne.

- Anne and Henry married in early 1533. The couple welcomed their first child at the start of September. However, the child was a girl, Elizabeth. Anne's time in favor was already beginning to wane. A few failed pregnancies and rumors cost her the king's affections and her life.

Henry VIII's Moves

- While the king authorized a few Protestant-leaning theological experiments, many of the changes sought instead to reinforce the king's authority over the personnel and wealth of his church. England's 800-plus monasteries became a target. The first blows fell against the smaller houses, after royal commissioners targeted abuses and forged miracles and relics.
- Also exposed were the tremendous material resources possessed by the monasteries. Thomas Cromwell pursued these riches. Cromwell had hoped to keep monastic wealth and lands firmly under royal control. With some bloodshed, the monasteries began to capitulate.
- Henry needed money, in part to fund an ambitious strategy of subduing Scotland and bringing Ireland more firmly under English control and in part to navigate the difficult waters of continental alliances and war in an age of religious conflict. Monastic lands were sold off.
- Henry's male heir finally arrived with his third wife, Jane Seymour. Jane's death shortly after the birth of the future Edward VI shook Henry, and he mourned her deeply. However, he moved on to more wives, first Anne of Cleves and then the teenaged Katherine Howard; the latter was eventually executed. Rounding out the group was twice-widowed Catherine Parr.

The King's Reformation

- Reformation came to England, but it was always on the king's terms. Those found guilty of daring to flout the king's authority paid for it with their lives, whether Catholic or Protestant. When the king died in 1547, his church was largely parallel to the Roman church in terms of its theology, but independent.

- Edward VI succeeded his father, but his age (nine) and the brevity of his tenure (just over six years) meant that he didn't leave his own definitive stamp on English religion. His tutors had been Protestant, and he was a precocious student of theology, but it was Edward's regents who determined policy.
- Henry intended Edward to be supervised by a regency council, but instead it was first one of his Seymour uncles and then the duke of Northumberland who moved into the clear ascendancy. Both furthered the cause of reform for political ends. One example was the liquidation of the lucrative chantries, accounts created to employ priests to say masses for the dead.
- The cause of Reformation became so entangled with the vision of royal power that the duke of Northumberland, as the young king was dying, sought to place a Protestant claimant on the throne instead of the old king's eldest, Catholic daughter, Mary. That candidate was Lady Jane Grey (d. 1554).
- The plot didn't work. The people rallied around Mary, a reminder that royal blood trumped the "correct" faith.

Mary and Elizabeth

- Mary spent her reign rooting out heresy, burning Protestants, and reversing the policies and faith practices that renounced the old ways. However, one big stumbling block was all of that wealth produced by the dissolution of the monasteries.
- Many of the great subjects objected to giving back the land they'd paid for to reestablish monasteries. They balked, and Catholic revival stalled. A tumor cost Mary her life, without the production of a Catholic heir who could secure the course of restoration.
- Even though Mary's relationship with sister Elizabeth had been marked by animosity and rupture, she recognized Elizabeth's right to the throne. In November 1558, Anne Boleyn's daughter became the last of the Tudors to rule England.

- Like her father, Elizabeth called on Parliament to lead the way (under her careful guidance). She had them craft a faith that was moderate in its theology and modest in its requirements.
- Some hardline groups challenged Elizabeth's settlement, but the queen would not be moved. She would weather the storm of rebellion and the threat of invasion, and her will carried the day.

Suggested Reading

Duffy, *Reformation Divided*.

Haigh, *The Plain Man's Pathways to Heaven*.

Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Does the English Reformation enhance or undermine Henry VIII's designation as a Renaissance prince?
- 2 What does Mary's failure to restore Catholicism in England indicate about the faith of the English people in the middle of the 16th century?
- 3 What might have motivated Elizabeth's subjects to accept her religious compromise?

LECTURE 33

Catholic Reformations: The Road to Trent

By the mid-16th century, the church in Rome was in crisis. The blows of the Lutheran and Zwinglian movements and Henry VIII's passion-driven break from the church in England left the papacy in a far more weakened state, both politically and theologically, than it had enjoyed a century previous. However, it was still one of the most powerful forces in Renaissance Europe, and it was not about to let that power slide away.

On Labels

- This course is full of broad labels that have become the lingo for Europe on the cusp of modernity; examples include the Renaissance, humanism, individualism, and secularism. Many of these terms mask a far more complicated set of realities, and that's certainly the case for the subject of this lecture and the next.
- The topic this lecture considers is often called the Counter-Reformation. This is an oppositional heading, which is useful in the sense that the church did take measures to confront Protestantism, doctrinally and institutionally.
- The next lecture, however, looks at a renewal of the Catholic faith that can't be fairly labeled as simply a response to Protestantism. Many of its drives actually predated Luther's break with the pope, and the Christian humanists had been using their scholarship to call for internal reform. It would be erroneous, then, to consider the church's activities as simply a response to the protestant threat.
- As a consequence, this period of Catholic renewal is commonly identified as Catholic Reformation. Keep in mind that the Counter-Reformation and Catholic reform often had significant overlap.

Gian Pietro Carafa

- In the person of Gian Pietro Carafa (1476–1559), it seemed there might be the zeal and militancy to halt the Protestant juggernaut in its tracks. He was born into a notable Neapolitan aristocratic family and taken as a young man under the wing of an uncle in the cardinalate, whom he succeeded as bishop of Chieti in 1505.
- Carafa was tapped by Pope Leo X (r. 1513–1521) to undertake various diplomatic tasks. In 1524, though, Carafa was given leave under Pope Clement VII (r. 1523–1534) to withdraw from his secular responsibilities in favor of membership in a new religious order. That order was the Congregation of Clerics Regular of the Divine Providence, better known as the Theatines. Carafa himself wrote the order's constitutions and was chosen its first general, or leader.

- The Theatines combined a regimen of asceticism, simplicity, and apostolic poverty with a preaching and devotional mission. In many ways, they served as a clear counter to Luther's denunciations of the moral laxity of the regular clergy.
- Withdrawal for Carafa was brief before the papacy beckoned once more. This time, it was Pope Paul III (r. 1534–1549), who called with a task far too important to refuse. Carafa, joined by a group of Catholic luminaries including England's Reginald Pole and Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, was tapped in 1536 to review the state of the Roman church and author a report on its condition.



🌀 Pope Paul III (1469–1549) 🌀

- After three months' deliberation, the committee delivered its explosive findings. The *Consilium de Emendanda Ecclesia* opened by decrying the church's current circumstances, calling out "those abuses, indeed those most serious diseases, which now for a long time afflict God's Church and especially this Roman Curia and which have now led, with these diseases gradually becoming more troublesome and destructive, to this great ruin which we see."
- The *Consilium* makes a rather bold statement, given Paul III's own path to power through preferment by the corrupt Borgia papacy. Some of the first moves of Paul's pontificate—taking the opportunity to make two of his teenaged grandsons cardinals—didn't augur well for change.
- However, change was coming anyway. Carafa, Pole, and Jacopo Sadoletto (1477–1547), bishop of Carpentras, were all elevated to the cardinalate. That signaled new power and that Paul III would reward those committed to the cause of Catholic reform.
- It was Carafa's endorsement that led Paul to establish the Inquisition in Rome, known as the Holy Office. This Roman Inquisition would take aim at heresy with stringency, and Carafa would be its boss: He served as the Holy Office's first inquisitor-general. Pope Paul III's pontificate would also witness the initiation of one of the greatest church councils in history, the Council of Trent (1545–1563).

Carafa as Pope

- At the age of 78, Carafa ascended to the throne of Saint Peter as Paul IV (r. 1555–1559). He decided that church reform would be at its most effective not under the leadership of a council but instead under the firm hand of papal monarchy.
- One of his key policies helped bring a halt to the free-wheeling exchange of information that had helped define and shape the Renaissance. It's called the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, translated in English as *Index of Prohibited Books*. With its creation in 1559, Paul IV declared war on books.

- Texts by Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and other reformers made the list of texts not to be read by good Catholics. Also on the list were works such as Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, and the Qu'ran.
- The *Index* was updated and republished with frequency, catching an ever-expanding list of Renaissance luminaries in its net. Soon among the victims were works of Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Valla, Aretino, Guicciardini, Castiglione, and more.
- Paul IV died in 1559, shortly after the inception of the *Index*. He had put an end to one chapter of the Renaissance, but he couldn't stop the Protestant Reformation.

The Council of Trent

- Paul III, when he settled into the work of reform, wanted to work within the clerical establishment and with conciliar aid. Paul IV, conversely, wanted to drive the engine of reform himself. An important action of Paul III was calling the aforementioned Council of Trent.
- Luther famously dismissed the council as too long delayed and of too little significance to make a substantive impact. He was wrong. The council would meet, with some pronounced interruptions—one of which was the entire pontificate of Paul IV—over the course of the next 18 years. The Roman church came out in force to meet the challenges of Protestantism head on.
- One of its chief contributions was clarifying Catholic belief and practice. For example, the council insisted Christ instituted seven sacraments.
- The council's decrees would also tackle troubles with authority. They affirm apostolic succession and the Roman church's power to interpret scripture. That was a sensitive issue, given the emphasis placed on the reading of scripture by the Protestant reformers and the myriad interpretations that followed.

- Underscored, too, was the position that good works were required for salvation, although they identified faith as essential as well. The Roman church laid out its position plainly, and then made it equally clear that to deviate from that position would not be permitted.

Reactions to Trent

- Trent reminded everyone that the Protestants didn't have a monopoly on teaching about Jesus. Unsurprisingly, the work at Trent was watched and commented on by the Protestant reformers, who offered their refutations on the Council's work as it unfolded.
- John Calvin offered his *Antidote to the Council of Trent* in 1547. Concerning the seven sacraments, he wrote, "The number Seven which they place under the sanction of an anathema has not only no support from Scripture, but none even from any approved author."
- Produced in conjunction with the end of the council's 18-year tenure was a catechism to be used by parish priests in instructing the Catholic faithful, first published in 1567 during the reign of Pope Pius V. The catechism was explicit in communicating the urgency for its creation, in a way that indicates its intent to combat Protestant rivalry:

[W]hile the preaching of the divine Word should never be interrupted in the church, surely in these, our days, it becomes necessary to labor with more than ordinary zeal and piety to nourish and strengthen the faithful with sound and wholesome doctrine, as with the food for life. For false prophets have gone forth in the world, to corrupt the minds of the faithful with various and strange doctrine.

- This catechism would be the instrument used to instruct Catholics on who they were as a people of faith. It wouldn't remain in Latin, but would be translated in the vernacular to become the standard and approved source of Catholic teaching.
- On balance, Trent created a Roman Catholic identity. That identity was clearly, definitively separate from that of the emerging Protestant sects.

Suggested Reading

O'Malley, *Trent and All That*.

Wickersham, *Rituals of Prosecution*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What lessons might Catholic leaders' response to the Reformation offer about the ways authorities react in times of crisis?
- 2 What factors make it difficult to distinguish winners and losers in the age of Reformation?
- 3 Was the structure of the Catholic Church a help or a hindrance to internal reform?

LECTURE 34

Catholic Reformations: Spiritual Revival



The previous lecture discussed the Counter-Reformation as the Roman church's institutional response to the external pressures of Protestantism. However, there were plenty of internal pressures for reform as well. This lecture takes a look at those.

Monastic Communities

- The pre-Reformation church of medieval Europe was hardly monolithic. It was a vibrant, dynamic, and ever-evolving structure. Thriving and diverse monastic communities fueled much of that dynamism. However, Pope Innocent III's zeal for papal monarchy prompted a narrowing of opportunities for monastic reform and new formations.
- By the 16th century, new foundations had become rare, and what had been a vital source of revitalization had become static and stagnant. That changed with the advent of Protestant Reformation. Monasticism became one of the fulcrums on which the Catholic Church's Reformation lever pivoted.
- Luther and the other reformers removed holy orders from their list of sacraments, citing not only the lack of scriptural evidence for its inclusion but also the hypocrisy of men and women living lives of sin, ease, and error within the often-violated space of the cloister. The Protestants denounced clerical celibacy and instead elevated Christian marriage as the ideal state for men and women. Reformers advocated clerical marriage and the closure of monasteries and convents in the lands that embraced Protestantism.
- The charges the Protestants laid at the doorsteps of the monasteries were not new ones. Long before Luther excoriated those clergy who lived by in holy orders, calls for the reform of monastic living and other vital elements of the institutional church's form and functions had been taking on an increasing urgency.
- The recognition of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin in 1528, then, occurred in the context of a Roman church seeking some positive recognition in the wake of blistering Protestant criticism. It also occurred in the context of recognition among many loyal to the papal church of both the need and the desire for internal renewal. This Capuchin offshoot of the Observant Franciscans became an important, if somewhat troubled, cornerstone of the Roman church's plan for renewal and reinvigoration.

Splits among the Franciscans

- Groups of Franciscans friars had, in the later 14th century, sought a more rigorous observance of the rule of Saint Francis of Assisi (1184–1226), a regimen famous for its austerity and uncompromising apostolic poverty. The Council of Constance in 1415 granted relative autonomy to the Observant Franciscans, as they would come to be known, in recognition of their piety and adherence to the vision of the movement's founder.
- Even this group had lost some of its vigor by the 16th century. This was a continuous problem for the especially rigid Franciscans: The lifestyle was a demanding one to adhere to. The movement often split into factions over how best to uphold or modify the demands.
- In the 1520s, one of these Observant Franciscans, Matteo da Bascio, came to believe that even his own branch of the Friars Minors failed to live up to the intentions of its saintly founder. Seeking greater discipline and piety, Bascio embraced a more eremitic than communal vision for the friars, as well as a devotion to preaching, especially among the poor. It was Bascio who introduced the beards and the painted brown hoods that came to give the group their name, the Capuchins.
- The Observant Franciscans decided that the bearded, hood-wearing Bascio and his followers weren't so observant anymore and rejected the innovations. Bascio did win the approval of Pope Clement VII, however. In 1528, Bascio and his three companions received papal permission to continue their practices.
- Bascio became the first vicar-general of the new Hermit Friars Minor. In 1529, representatives of the member houses met to establish their constitutions. The hermit ideal was replaced in favor of small communities, numbering between 8 and 12 members.
- The quest for a life shorn of ornamentation and material wealth was codified in the constitutions, requiring mendicancy and a strict adherence to Saint Francis's prohibition against even making physical contact with money. They'd be discalced, or bare-foot, as well, and fast with regularity.

- However, Bascio never settled easily into an administrative position and subsequently returned to the Observant fold. His withdrawal sparked a crisis of leadership. His immediate successor was unpopular and removed from power. A later Capuchin vicar-general fled Italy as a Protestant convert.
- Pope Paul III stepped in to determine the future of the Capuchins. With rumors of heresy surrounding the hooded and bearded friars, they were put on lockdown and forbidden from preaching. A subsequent review of their faith and methods declared the group to be doctrinally sound, and they were allowed to get back to business.
- By 1574, Capuchin numbers reached 3,500. By 1700, their numbers approached 30,000. Their creation speaks to a centuries-long dynamic of internal reform, created by men and women of vision and piety, seeking a purer faith experience of their own. The point is that the quest for better Christian living was not exclusive to the Protestants.

The Council of Trent

- Along with answering the Protestant challenge, the Council of Trent (1545–1563) tackled many internal problems of Catholicism. The council took on pluralism—the holding of multiple clerical offices simultaneously—and forced any who’d acquired multiple livings to give them up. The selling or gifting of clerical office was likewise forbidden, as was absenteeism—priests would be made to reside in their parishes.
- One of the more important of Trent’s aims involved clerical education. Education became a key mechanism through which the Roman church improved the quality of its leadership and, by extension, the faith knowledge of its laypeople. It justified the establishment of seminaries for training the clergy.

Other Operations

- Trent wasn’t the only force at work when it came to operationalizing Catholic renewal. For example, the Capuchins emerged decades before Trent. So, too, did the Theatines, cofounded by Gian Pietro Carafa,

and the Barnabites, formed at the church of Saint Barnabas in Milan in 1530. The Barnabites vowed never to seek high clerical office so that they could remain devoted their ministries of preaching and teaching.

- More than 30 orders were established in the 16th and 17th centuries in total. One of the new orders—the Society of Jesus—stood out, though. It possessed a charismatic leader; an exceptional number of early adherents who embraced its three chief aims of discipline, education, and missionary work; and a track record of success in returning lost congregants to the Catholic fold as well as making new ones on distant shores.
- Its Spanish founder was Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556). Having reached his own understanding of God’s will through meditation and reflection, Ignatius sought to create an imminently orderly plan that would help others reach the same spiritual heights. He created a text called *The Spiritual Exercises*. This intensely practical instructional manual for communion with the will of God was received with wild enthusiasm.
- The Society of Jesus, also known as Jesuits, would likewise be key to Catholic reform. In that context, their educational legacy is most impressive. Soon the Jesuits had 150 colleges, and from the students in those colleges would come the next generation of Jesuits. They adopted the features of Renaissance humanism’s emphasis on grammar, rhetoric, ancient languages, mathematics, and science.

Women and Reform

- Notable women, particularly in Italian and Spanish lands, became exemplars of Catholic piety and served as an inspiration to other women. They contributed to the educational and organizational dynamism of Catholic Reformation.
- The order founded in Italy by Saint Angela de Merici (1474–1540) serves as an excellent case in point. Her Company of St. Ursula—known by its shortened designation of Ursulines—became the first order for women

focused on educational ministry. They took their inspiration for female mentoring from their namesake, an early Christian martyred with a group of virginal companions.

- In focusing on female education, the Ursulines provided a particularly vital service to the Roman church. The Ursulines were responsible for educating the daughters of the urban commercial elites, who could, in turn, transmit their knowledge of Catholic doctrine to their children when the time came.
- Another example comes in the form of Saint Teresa of Avila, a Spaniard. Inspired by Franciscan reform, Teresa established the Discalced Carmelite movement, a reinvigoration of a 12th-century order. Teresa established more than a dozen convents whose principles emphasized poverty and mendicancy joined with interior piety and prayer.

Attempts to Govern Women

- The perceived dangers of ill-governed female sexuality were a particular issue of anxiety for Catholic reformers. Insufficiently rigorous standards of confinement had led to embarrassingly obvious breaches of the clerical vow of chastity and made for a particular target of Protestant and Catholic reformers alike. Pregnant nuns were the living and literal embodiment of the abuses of clerical immorality.
- Reformers at the Council of Trent demanded that nuns remain in their convents. They also demanded that no outsiders without express ecclesiastical permission and in the face of extraordinary circumstances was allowed to enter the cloister. Patriarchal authority was reinforced, as bishops were granted oversight of female communal living.
- These decisions did have the desired effect of increasing discipline. However, they also significantly reduced female autonomy and leadership within the space of the convent, a marked feature of medieval monasticism that had granted a number of powerful women agency. Female authority was largely viewed with suspicion.

Suggested Reading

Brundin and Treherne, ed., *Forms of Faith in Sixteenth-Century Italy*.

Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal*.

O'Reilly, *From Ignatius to John of the Cross*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 In what ways did the Catholic Reformation address the causes and concerns of the Christian Renaissance? What overlap do you see in Christian humanism and the aims and actions of the Catholic Reformation?
- 2 Is the process of Catholic reform better understood as the work of the institutional church or of individuals?

LECTURE 35

Reformation Culture: Continuity and Change

he question of how to create the appropriate communal religious space was an incredibly contentious and emotional business in early modern Christian communities. This lecture examines the fabric of these communities to reveal what it felt like to be a Protestant and a Catholic in Reformation Europe, as individuals and collectives experienced and expressed faith in their spiritual surroundings.

Religious Imagery

- In early modern Europe, reformers asked to whose glory the ornate images that adorned religious spaces were really offered. They charged that wealthy patrons who commissioned pieces sought to celebrate or commemorate their own elevated position and wealth or to earn spiritual credit for their gifts to the church. They suggested God wasn't really part of those calculations.
- Regardless, images were myriad in religious spaces. Some had three-dimensional form, like sculptures or reliquaries. The complaints of the reformers against the latter were legion: These types of implements, they believed, impeded rather than deepened true spirituality.
- In Wittenberg, Germany, and other early reform centers, violent destruction and disorder accompanied the call that religious images be removed from places of worship. One of the most outspoken of these iconoclasts was Luther's university colleague, Andreas Karlstadt (1486–1541).
- Karlstadt, an early proponent of Luther's cause, was impatient with the speed of religious change and frequently broke with Luther on social and political issues connected to reform. Karlstadt had raged mightily against the use and display of religious images in Wittenberg before Luther published more sedated commentary in 1525.
- In early 1522, Karlstadt wrote against the "carved and painted idols set up on the altars" in a bid to expedite their removal from places of worship in Wittenberg. He went so far as to claim that "images bring death to those who worship or venerate them. ... It would be a thousand times better if [images] were set up in hell or the fiery furnace than in the houses of God."
- In February, when Karlstadt and his supporters judged the civic authorities insufficiently diligent in dealing with images, they took matters into their own hands. A riot ensued as the icons were destroyed.

- Leading second-generation Protestant reformer John Calvin was also blunt in his attack on the display and veneration of religious images. He preached against the creation and worship of images as prohibited by God. In the lands that embraced Calvinist doctrine, houses of worship displayed an austerity that communicated a clear rejection of the distraction that images represented.
- Perhaps the greatest cleansing of churches occurred in Antwerp in 1566 during the early stage of the revolt of the Low Countries. English trader Sir Richard Clough (c. 1530–1570) provided an account, lamenting the resulting bleakness of the Cathedral of Antwerp: “It looked like a hell, with above 10,000 torches burning, and such a noise as if heaven and earth had gone together.”

Sounds and Words

- The sound of faith underwent a makeover as well. While Latin maintained a place of significance in printed intellectual discourse and remained the language of the Catholic Mass, vernacular language transformed communal religious space, both physical and constructed. In Protestant lands, divine services were conducted in the native tongue. Parishioners heard scripture in their own language, and preachers offered homilies and sermons in plain, direct language to instruct their congregants.
- The print business thrived on the publication of vernacular Bibles and popular devotional texts. Even in Catholic lands, publishers catered to the enormous popularity of vernacular mystical accounts and saints’ lives, as Europe’s reading public continued its early modern expansion.
- Singing also had a part to play during the age of Reformation. For example, Luther used music to promote faith and published spiritual songs. However, the use of sacred music—including hymn singing—was not without controversy in Protestant lands. There, some reformers denounced vocal and instrumental. Regardless, the popularity of hymn singing among parishioners and the value placed on singing fueled a market for musicians.

Art

- In Catholic lands, the age of Reformation sparked enthusiasm for a distinctive artistic style: the Baroque. The work of Italian master Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), particularly his *Ecstasy of St. Teresa*, is emblematic of the Baroque style. The scope, scale, and drama of his sculptures and architectural designs embraced the power of art to heighten emotions, as it overwhelmed with magnificence.



Gian Lorenzo Bernini's *Ecstasy of St. Teresa*

- Baroque art communicated clear messages with emotionally charged, grandiose imagery. Its most notable feature is its elaborateness of detail, used to engender a sense of drama for the beholder. Departing in some ways from earlier Renaissance styles, Baroque art appealed to the senses rather than to reason.

Suggested Reading

Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed*.

Hall and Cooper, ed., *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*.

Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 As you think back on the lectures in this section of the course, would you say that the Reformation continued the Renaissance, changed it, or ended it?
- 2 What do you think the debates about images during the Reformation reveal about how early modern Europeans experienced their faith?

LECTURE 36

Renaissance War and Peace: Diplomacy



his lecture focuses its attention on diplomats as a means of opening a broader consideration of the interaction among the states of early modern Europe. Specific points of focus include the genesis of diplomats, their home life, and gift giving related to diplomacy.

On Diplomats

- Until the 13th century, it's difficult to find evidence for diplomats at work who were endowed with special authority to negotiate on behalf of their directors. More typically, medieval officials were instead assigned a very particular mission and authorized to act only within limited parameters. At the completion of that mission, the emissary returned home.
- Renaissance politics, though, demanded something other than part-timers pulled in to complete individual or discrete tasks. The fluidity of the Italian political scene—with states aligning and breaking with one another—required more than the occasional duty in service of the state. Up-to-date information was vital.
- The Italian states pioneered the practice of dispatching ambassadors directed to stay in residence in the land of their appointments. Their chief tasks were gathering information and networking. They sounded out potential allies and watched foes carefully. They also wrote copious records.
- Resident ambassadors had much to say about the individual people of note they came into contact with. They also offered descriptions of economic activities, religious practices, and force of arms. During the Renaissance, these officials were also endowed with new powers, including the authority to negotiate on behalf of their masters.
- Ambassadors were not always natives of their state of employ. Having pioneered the practice, Italian diplomats were highly sought after. For example, Henry VIII of England employed Bologna-born Gregorio Casali to serve as his ambassador at the pope's court during the tense years in which his breach with Rome played out.

Settling In

- Foreigners often settled into the states of their appointments at the most intimate level, that of the household. Resident ambassadors settled with a train of retainers and servants and even family members in tow.
- Resident embassies of the sort in today's capital cities didn't yet exist. Instead, the houses of ambassadors had to double up as both residential living spaces and official spaces for the conduct of the agents' diplomatic business.
- That meant that the ambassador's household served as a reflection on both its master and the sovereign or power he represented. For this reason, ambassadors' households had to be orderly and well governed.

Diplomatic Gift Giving

- Diplomatic gift giving during the Renaissance demonstrated themes of ostentation and obligation. A gift proffered by an ambassador could ingratiate him with members of the court and help cement links between his native state and the state of his appointment.
- Diplomatic gift exchange was, however, also fraught with tension. Leaders, their councilors, and their ambassadors fretted mightily over these transactions. The culture of giving in Renaissance Europe was extraordinarily complex.
- The acceptance of a gift traditionally indebted the recipient to the giver, and gifts had to be returned to restore equilibrium. For that return offering to function as a means of balancing the scales, it had to match the value of the original gift. Giving too lavishly could expose the giver to censure or lead to the gift's rejection. Giving too meagerly likewise posed problems.
- If equilibrium wasn't restored through reciprocity, the appearance (or reality) of subordination was the result. For example, the Turkish sultan, to the exasperation of the states of Christian Europe, treated any gifts as tribute and had them recorded as such in his court registry.

- The need to proffer gifts of value fueled an intense market for suitably elaborate items and sparked competition among rival givers. An example comes from James I of England (r. 1603–1625). Like his Tudor predecessors, he valued his menagerie of royal beasts.
- When England and Spain were in the middle of marriage negotiations for James's son Charles and Maria, the daughter of Philip IV (r. 1621–1640), the Spanish sent an elephant and camels off to London to woo the king. Charles, developing a taste of art that would deepen during his own reign, was himself given Titian's *Portrait of Charles V with a Dog*, among other paintings.
- The manner and occasion of presenting gifts mattered, too. A high price tag wasn't always enough to secure favor, but elaborate presentation could help. For example, in the early 17th century, Louis XIII sent James I of England hawks, horses, and dogs, accompanied by an entourage of people who made a magnificent entrance.
- At the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1521, England's Henry VIII and France's Francis I were able to give each other presents in person, but such meetings of monarchs were quite rare. When rulers sought to woo one another, they had to do so at distance, with others doing the heavy lifting.

Suggested Reading

Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*.

Heal, *The Power of Gifts*.

Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Where do you see evidence of Renaissance values we have studied elsewhere in our course in the theory and practice of Renaissance diplomacy? Was the Renaissance diplomat a Renaissance man?
- 2 In what ways does the study of Renaissance diplomacy offer evidence on other aspects of the Renaissance?
- 3 Can you think of modern equivalents of diplomatic giving that allow countries to demonstrate their generosity and/or superiority?

LECTURE 37

The French Wars of Religion

his lecture turns to the French Wars of Religion to examine the ways in which the fusion of religious and political imperatives erupted into bloodshed and a new way of thinking about the relationship of subject and authority. In France, a kingdom divided over the cause of religion, an extensive debate occurred over what happens to the subject-authority relationship when religious persecution is injected into it.

Would-Be Reformers

- The kingdom of France was a bastion of support for the Roman church since Martin Luther launched his assault on indulgences in 1517. A group of would-be reformers, including Renaissance humanist Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, gathered in the early 1520s at Meaux, east of Paris. D'Étaples and the Meaux group sought to bring people into direct contact with the word of God through the production of a French-language New Testament.
- However, the Meaux group was shut down in the wake of a withering condemnation by the theology faculty of the University of Paris in 1523. Moreover, heretics were being executed in France during the 1520s, and others swayed to the cause of reform decided it was safer to relocate to more inviting environments. The French-speaking Swiss cantons proved a particularly attractive destination.
- Despite the evidence provided by deaths and defections, the enhanced centralization of the French state led to greater control of the early Reformation challenge to religious uniformity than in the Holy Roman Empire. A line was crossed, though, on the evening of October 17, 1534.
- Under the cover of darkness, a group of conspirators went to work, armed with copies of a poster titled “Trustworthy Articles on the Horrible, Great, & Unbearable Abuses of the Papal Mass.” They plastered these posters or placards across a number of provincial cities in France and in its capital city. They even dared to affix a copy to the door of King Francois I's royal bedchamber at his residence at Amboise.
- The poster's text was the work of a reformed pastor in the Swiss city of Neuchatel by the name of Antoine Marcourt (1485–1561). It was a heavy condemnation of Mass. The condemnation of the Mass was considered a monstrous crime, but posting a placard at the entrance to the king's bedchamber also represented an affront to royal dignity and constituted a very real threat against the king's person.
- The crackdown on the provocateurs was swift and severe. A hefty reward was offered for the identification of the perpetrators, who were condemned to death by burning.

- Marcourt's supporters in France went to work again in January, though, this time distributing printed copies of *A Very Useful and Salutary Short Treatise on the Holy Eucharist of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. The response was a royal parade that culminated in the celebration of Mass, followed by six heretics being burned at the stake.
- The so-called Affair of the Placards ushered in a marked change in attitude in France. The relatively conciliatory policies that had characterized the French response to reform were replaced instead with intolerance and repression. Many of those sympathetic to the cause of reform, including a young university student named John Calvin (1509–1564), recognized the shifting of the winds and fled, leaving their homeland behind for the cause of their beliefs.

Calvin

- Although the theological challenges of Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli did win proponents in France, it was the theology of Calvin that would spark a full-scale civil war in the state he'd fled for fear of persecution. While systematizing his theology and remaking Geneva into a reformed city par excellence, Calvin also sought to bring the Reformation to France.
- Calvin took up his pen in hopes of bringing about a top-down Reformation, directed by the French nobles. He accepted and trained ministers in Geneva for deployment in France to spread the new doctrine among the people.
- Calvin's faith did spread. During the 1550s, faithful converts began to form clandestine congregations, although the risk in doing so was significant. The possession of heretical books was one thing; participating in Protestant ceremonies and services that modified or rejected outright the Catholic sacramental theologies was another.
- Calvinism was uncompromising. Internal beliefs had to find parallel outward expression, and so there was no wiggle room for playing it safe. With prohibitions firmly in place against the reformers, the emerging French Calvinist, or Huguenot, population was in a vice.

- The Huguenots numbered only 10 to 15 percent of the population. However, they counted among their number many powerful aristocrats and significant segments of the urban literate professional groups who found Calvin's doctrines on salvation and discipline appealing.

Henry II

- The son of the king who'd found a placard on his bedroom door in 1534, Henry II (r. 1547–1559), wanted to crush the heretics before they had a chance to ensnare more men of note. When he came to the throne, Henry even established a special department of the Parlement of Paris dedicated to the task. It was known as the Burning Chamber.
- Henry attacked the Huguenots with vigor, but he had other matters to attend to, notably the final last stages of the Habsburg-Valois Wars that had such a profound impact on Italian life and politics during the Renaissance. Henry opted to negotiate a peace with Philip II of Spain (r. 1556–1598) at the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559.
- To cement peace between the Habsburg and Valois and the joining of the two dynasties in marriage—Philip II and Henry's daughter Elizabeth would be married—a great jousting tournament was held in June 1559. Henry took part, but died after an opponent's jousting pole penetrated his visor.

After Henry II

- When Henry II died in 1559, his successor was François II (r. 1559–1560), the young bridegroom of Mary, Queen of Scots. In just a year and a half's time, though, François would be dead, and his brother would ascend the throne as Charles IX (r. 1560–1574).
- Instability characterized these years of young kings. Among the power-players was Henry II's queen, Catherine de' Medici. The Guise uncles of Mary—the cardinal of Lorraine and his brother, François—also wielded significant authority.

- Catherine initially sought to reconcile the religious factions in France, but the Guises sought to sharpen lines of distinction, particularly after they uncovered and foiled a Huguenot plot to seize François II in 1560. Among the backers of the plot was one of the Bourbons, a junior branch of the royal family that ruled Navarre and embraced the Huguenot cause. Hundreds of Protestant noblemen were executed, and tensions swelled.
- When François died a few months later, Catherine was able to secure sufficient support from the royal council to assume the regency for Charles, who was 10 years old when François died. She attempted to defuse tensions between Catholics and Huguenots.
- She sought to bring the two sides together to see if common ground could be reached. Catherine's gathering of Catholic and Protestant theologians in October 1561 failed, though, as the participants broke up the discussion without her permission.

More Conflicts

- Protestants began engaging in acts of iconoclasm, smashing images of saints and destroying other relics. Outraged Catholics responded by striking out at Protestants and torching their places of worship.
- In the hopes of averting an outright breach, Catherine endorsed the bold Edict of Saint-Germain in early 1562. It gave formal recognition to the Huguenots and allowed them to worship, if they did so in private and outside the boundaries of towns. They also had to return lands and places of worship seized from Catholics and cease their denunciation of Catholic tenets.
- The attempted rapprochement the edict represented wouldn't live long, though. The duke of Guise saw to that. His troops' assault on a large company of Protestants worshipping in a barn at Vassy in March proved a tipping point.

- Louis de Bourbon became convinced that the time for war had come. The Huguenots were in for the fight of their lives. On and off over the next decade, the two sides clashed, with numerous atrocities authored by both sides, resulting in the destruction of property and loss of life.
- Eventually, the fighting calmed. Following the Peace of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in August 1570, which halted the third war of the decade, Catherine brokered a marriage settlement: Her daughter, Marguerite, would marry Henry of Navarre, the son of the Huguenot leader Antoine de Bourbon, who'd died at the outbreak of war in 1562.

A Failed Match

- The dynastic match was hoped to heal the breach. It failed. The marriage took place on August 18, and a round of balls, tournaments, and other celebrations kicked off in Paris to support the new bonds that joined Catholic and Huguenot together.
- On August 22, a would-be assassin fired at Huguenot leader Gaspard de Coligny and wounded his hand. The Huguenot leaders accused the Guises and their supporters of engineering the plot to kill Coligny. Others blamed the royal family.
- The mood in Paris turned from joyful to riotous as rumors spread that the angry Huguenots were preparing to get their revenge. Observer Claude Haton wrote, "And so [the Catholic leaders] resolved to do to the Huguenots what the Huguenots wanted to do to the king and princes." Among the victims of the preemptive strike on August 24, St. Bartholomew's Day, was Coligny.



- The attack on other Protestant leaders was joined by a wave of popular violence, and the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre had begun. The slaughter of Paris was repeated in other provincial cities and throughout the countryside over the weeks that followed, with a death toll somewhere between 4,000 and 6,000.

A Changing Script

- Calvin's relationship with authority was particularly complex, but his supporters in France had used the traditional fiction that they weren't really resisting authority in taking up arms against the crown. They were instead liberating the king from bad councilors, like the Guises, who were Catholic zealots.
- Charles IX took personal ownership of the massacre, so it made little sense for the Protestants to continue suggesting that tyrannical governors were misleading the king. He was clearly the tyrant himself. With the old rationale for their rebellion in tatters, Huguenot spokesmen had to come up with an alternative, and they did: the resistance theory.
- Some humanist scholars, like Calvinist Theodore Beza (1519–1565), offered their theory of the right to resist. Beza published his *Right of Magistrates* in 1574, elaborating on themes he'd advanced in earlier writings. He located in the "mutual oath between king and people" just grounds for resistance.
- Charles IX died in 1574, and Henry III (r. 1574–1589) assumed the throne. He brokered peace with the Protestants in 1576 to the outrage of the Guises. They teamed up with the Spanish to ignite a new round of religious violence.
- Change was once more on the horizon. When the king's brother, François, duke of Anjou, died in 1584 fighting in the Netherlands, the Valois line was finally spent. The junior branch of the family tree—the Bourbons—was poised to come to throne. The Bourbon in line was Henry of Navarre, the Huguenot leader.

- France plunged into a three-way contest for power in the War of the Three Henrys, named for Henry III, Henry of Navarre, and Henry, duke of Guise. After Henry de Guise took the capital in 1588, Henry III ordered the deaths of the duke and his brother, the cardinal of Lorraine, throwing his support behind his Huguenot heir. Henry III was in turn assassinated himself, in August 1589.
- At last, after two decades of war, it seemed the Huguenots and all of France would have a Huguenot for a king. However, Henry of Navarre, now Henry IV, offered what would be his fifth conversion to Catholicism. His goal was to appease the 90 percent of his subjects who professed that faith. He knew his rule would never be secure without his adherence, and it was a compromise he was willing to make.

Suggested Reading

Elwood, *The Body Broken*.
Frisch, *Forgetting Differences*.
Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Why do you think the Reformation played out so differently in France from the Holy Roman Empire?
- 2 As you think about the French Reformation as well as reform movements elsewhere, what role do you assign print technology in the course of reformation?
- 3 In what ways does resistance theory fit with Renaissance values and imperatives, and in what ways does it diverge?

LECTURE 38

The Dutch Revolt

In the 16th century, Charles V (r. 1519–1556), the holy Roman emperor and Spanish king, assigned his son, Philip II (r. 1556–1598), the responsibility of ruling half of his massive empire. For counsel, Philip II turned to military commander Fernando Álvarez de Toledo y Pimentel, the third duke of Alba. Alba was a man of extraordinary ambition, which would play a heavy role in the appointment that would come to define Alba's legacy: his turn from 1567 to 1573 as governor-general of the Spanish-dominated Low Countries, or Netherlands.

The Low Countries, located in the northwest corner of Europe, had a thriving commercial and agrarian economy that made it a shining jewel in the Spanish crown during the 16th century. However, it was also a hotbed of political and religious rebellion, thanks to the emergence of a group of Calvinist nobles who sought to safeguard their political and religious privileges against Spanish control.

Alva in Command

- Before his direct involvement in the Netherlands, Alva had already advised Philip of dangers lurking there. He coached the king on the need to crush the potential of rebellion swiftly or, if that couldn't be effected immediately, to compromise in the short term only so long as to guarantee a successful exercise of Spanish power.
- The king came around to Alva's position on the need for action in the summer of 1566. Philip's religious policies in the Low Countries, intended to restore Spanish authority and reinvigorate Catholicism, were met with resistance by a group of nobles. Their objections to Philip's ecclesiastical reforms ranged from petitions to iconoclasm.
- Alva went to war. The duke marched an army of 10,000 soldiers 700 miles from Italy, where he'd been stationed, into the Netherlands. This was a show of force designed to impress upon the king's rebellious subjects the might and reach of Spanish power. Additionally, the duke's judicial and financial strategies helped initiate what would become an eight-decade war for independence that tore the Spanish Low Countries apart.



- Alva established the Council of Troubles to target suspected heretic-rebels. In March 1568, 1,500 people condemned as rebels were executed. Philip's regent in the Low Countries, Margaret of Parma, protested against Alva's brutality, often identified even in scholarship as a "reign of terror."
- Margaret's protests had no effect, and her subsequent resignation gave Alva an even freer hand. However, many of his chief targets, including Prince William of Orange (1533–1584), had fled in advance of the arrests and began to organize opposition.

Fighting Begins

- Spanish attempts to suppress the Dutch Protestant rebels intensified. Insurgents waged guerilla campaigns from within, capturing Holland and Zeeland in 1572. Other rebels took to the sea to harass the Spanish fleet and interrupt communications. From beyond the borders, Prince William and his brother Louis of Nassau launched invasions in 1572, staging their attacks from German and French lands.
- Alva was able to check these invasions and was even able to restore part of Holland to Spanish control, although he grumbled about the provisioning and the quality of his forces. Alva's measured successes of 1572 weren't enough to satisfy his king, however. Alva's star had been fading at court in his absence, and he was dismissed in 1573.
- Philip II's state began to crumble under the demands of its own defense. Spain was rapidly become a serious loan risk, repeatedly declaring bankruptcy as the crown sought to hold together its many kingdoms and territories.
- Additionally, the Spanish treatment of the rebels in the Low Countries, particularly the ruthless pacification practices of Alva's Council of Blood, had become a powerful component of the so-called Black Legend of Spain. This was a legacy of the Spanish empire marked by charges of cruelty and religious zealotry.

Importance of the Low Countries

- The Low Countries were extremely important to 16th-century Europe's mightiest king. With a coastline facing the North Sea, the Netherlands' port cities were able to participate in the Hanseatic League's trade network and grew wealthy from serving as a destination for raw wool imports from England and other materials.
- It was in also the Netherlands where early practices that would coalesce into an agricultural revolution began to appear. Agriculturalists designed schemes for crop rotation that would allow high yield without the need for extended fallow periods, for example.
- The Flemish city of Antwerp became a leading European commercial, cultural, and printing center, entering its golden age of wealth and influence in the 15th century. The economy of the Netherlands was humming along, then, when Charles V was born in 1500, in the city of Ghent in Flanders. Through his father, Philip, the duke of Burgundy (1478–1506), Charles assumed control of the Burgundian Low Countries.
- While the Burgundian rivalry with the French crown resulted in territorial contraction in the south, the dukes maintained their hold on these lucrative lands. Although Charles's impressive inheritance would bring him territories across Europe, the Low Countries were his first home.
- A number of factors, though, caused economic crisis in the 16th century, and the Netherlands was hit hard by the shifting economic realities. Two major ingredients caused massive inflation in western Europe: a rapidly growing population and a flood of gold and silver from overseas territories.
- The result of this so-called price revolution, in many areas, was recession. The threat and reality of war resulted in a sharp decline in trade. Wages didn't keep pace with prices, and so demand fell in the face of contracting consumerism. Poor harvests and failed business ventures left their mark as well.

- There were ways to thrive, however. The emergence of capitalist enterprise, involving the pursuit of profit through investment and new ideologies and practices of land usage, was beginning to transform the European economy. Urban centers sponsored consumer-oriented markets, while the enclosure of land altered traditional communal agriculture.
- Rulers such as Charles's son Philip II understood the value of these changes, since revenue from capitalist practices, when captured by the state, could support their own political and military agendas. Philip, however, didn't identify with his subjects in the Low Countries with the ease his father had.
- Philip spent little time there. Both his distance and his clear prioritization of his Spanish holdings drove a wedge between Philip and the elites whose local authority provided the day-to-day leadership of the 17 provinces that comprised the Low Countries. Additionally, he was a staunch Catholic determined to rule Catholic subjects.

After Alva

- After Alva's removal from power in 1573, Don Luis de Requesens (1528–1576) was charged with restoring order and religious uniformity in the Low Countries. Philip gave him no license to concede on the point of religion, though, and the northern Calvinist provinces refused to bend to Spanish forces.
- The new governor's death in 1576 allowed for a meeting of the estates, who established an army drawn from both north and south. This force formally replaced the guerillas on land and sea who had carried the cause of defense up to that point, but it was a somewhat awkward amalgamation of Calvinist rebels from the northern provinces and Catholic elites from the south.
- This disparate group would find common ground through the devastation of Antwerp. The Spanish Fury of 1576—the work of mutinous unpaid Spanish soldiers—resulted in an 11-day bloodbath. More than 7,000 residents were slaughtered, and a third of the city's buildings, including the city hall, were destroyed.

- The alliance of northern and southern provinces was bolstered further by the tone-deaf policies of the next short-lived governor-general, Don John of Austria (1547–1578), Philip II's half-brother. Don John alienated the southern Catholic nobles who should have been supportive of Spanish authority and pushed them further into the orbit of the northern rebels.
- The disaffection of the southern aristocrats would decline, though, with the appointment of Don John's much more able successor, Alessandro Farnese, the duke of Parma. Parma was far more conciliatory to these Catholic magnates, and his ability to secure their allegiance was cemented in 1579 in the Treaty of Arras. Spanish troops were withdrawn from the lands that subscribed to the treaty—the Walloon provinces and principalities.
- The desire of the nobles for power, and the fear that support for their authority wasn't forthcoming from Spain, was a key ingredient in the recipe for rebellion. So, too, though, was the demand of the Calvinists for religious freedom.
- Additionally, individuals' priorities changed over time. For example, William was the *de facto* leader of the rebel cause in 1568, but he wasn't actually a Calvinist. He would later adopt Calvinism, but it wasn't faith that animated his initial challenges to Spanish authority.

Shifting Priorities

- The shifting of priorities helped undo the fragile unity in the Netherlands. In January 1579, the Union of Utrecht created articles of confederation that would, unplanned, become the basis of a new independent state in the north.
- In 1581, what was a pledge for union became a declaration of autonomy from Spanish authority. Events in the Netherlands took an international turn with the invitation of the French duke of Anjou (1555–1584) to act as on behalf of the Netherlands' liberty at William's instigation.

The Catholic Anjou was more a polarizing than unifying force, and his introduction of a new set of French imperatives introduced more confusion than clarity.

- Anjou's death in early 1584 dealt a far less severe blow to the Calvinists, though, than William's own assassination by a Catholic just a few weeks later. William became a national hero for the seven United Provinces in the north who would come to make his successors their hereditary house. They would continue to push for autonomy from Spain, although Parma's Army of Flanders began to chip away at their holdings.
- William's death and the defeats inflicted by Parma in 1584 also had the consequence of drawing the English further into the cause of the United Provinces. Elizabeth I's government had offered supports to the rebels at various points since the initiation of the struggle. Pressured by her councilors, though, Elizabeth's England would take a far more public stand with the rebels in 1585, signing a treaty that pledged an army under the leadership of Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester.
- Leicester's policies would prove divisive and ultimately unsuccessful. Leadership of the independence movement would pass to Johan van Oldenbarnevelt and William of Orange's son, Maurice of Nassau. Philip's outrage at English interference in the Netherlands sparked war between England and Spain whose most memorable clash would come in the English Channel in the summer of 1588.

Philip II's Agenda

- Philip II's agenda was so overburdened that he simply couldn't manage it. He wanted to secure the return of the United Provinces to the Spanish fold, but he wasn't able to pull it off. Neither could his son, Philip III (r. 1598–1621), or Philip III's regents, Albert of Austria (1559–1621) and Isabella (1566–1633).
- What had already been secured in practice—the treatment of the north as an independent state—was codified in a 12-year truce in 1609. The truce reopened trade between the United Provinces and Spain and the West Indies, a boon to Amsterdam.

- When the terms of the truce expired in 1621, war was renewed. However, this chapter of the conflict was no longer primarily about the traditional struggle of United Provinces and Spain. It was instead connected to the epic European-wide religious and political conflict known as the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648).
- It wouldn't be until the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War that the independence of the United Provinces was finally confirmed. By that point, those northern United Provinces—or Dutch Republic—was already a major player on the international scene.

Suggested Reading

Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt*.
Nierop, *Treason in the Northern Quarter*.
't Hart, *The Dutch Wars of Independence*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Do you see evidence of the Black Legend of Spain in popular culture and prejudices today?
- 2 Were Alba's policies in keeping with the customs and ideas of authority of the Renaissance?
- 3 The early modern Spanish empire was undone by calls for independence and the challenge to maintain unity. Where in our world are demands for autonomy threatening long-established political unions?

LECTURE 39

The Spanish Armada

he story behind the Spanish Armada is much more complex than the familiar tale of a ragtag group of English mariners miraculously vanquishing a seemingly invincible force. It was instead the product of a complex set of personal and international conflicts that formed only part of a larger Renaissance struggle over faith and state.

Two Monarchs

- To understand the Spanish Armada, it's necessary to understand the relationship of the two royal archrivals whose states were at war: Philip of Spain and Elizabeth of England. Philip was the son of Charles V and Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII. Three decades before the Spanish Armada sailed, Philip and Elizabeth became in-laws, thanks to Philip's marriage to Elizabeth's half-sister Mary Tudor.



Philip II (1527–1598)

- Philip and Mary's policies sought to undo religious reform in England. They revoked the Protestant Reformation and restored Catholicism—at least officially. Elizabeth, at the time a princess, publicly conformed to this abrupt reversal.
- It's difficult to tell what the two future sovereigns Elizabeth and Philip thought of each other at that point. Philip certainly didn't think much of England, decamping as soon as was polite. Mary was brokenhearted. Ironically, Philip did make a fateful contribution to the development of his wife's state, encouraging the building up of England's neglected fleet.
- Mary's death in 1558 made Elizabeth queen and allowed her to repeal her sister's Catholic policies. Elizabeth reestablished a Protestant English church with Parliament's assistance in 1559. New widower Philip asked for Elizabeth's hand in marriage, but she demurred.
- The former in-laws then settled into their new relationship as fellow European monarchs. However, the business of religion couldn't be tamped down permanently during the early modern age of reform. After two relatively peaceful decades, religious tensions contributed to a deterioration of Anglo-Spanish relations.
- The falling out between the two states also had economic causes. Most important was the continued harassment of Spanish shipping by English privateers such as Francis Drake.
- The assassination of Dutch rebel leader William I in 1584 moved Elizabeth's councilors to urge a more proactive foreign policy and the promise of harsh punishments for those who sought to unseat the queen. Elizabeth was persuaded to deepen her support for the Dutch cause, even though she knew it meant war with Spain.

The Spanish Armada

- Plans for what would become the Spanish Armada began soon after Elizabeth's treaty with the Dutch in 1585. Philip invited two highly qualified parties to offer strategies for an invasion of England. One was his commander in the Netherlands, his nephew, the prince of Parma. The other was the marquis of Santa Cruz, who commanded Spain's fleet.
- Santa Cruz favored embarkation from Portugal with 55,000 men, protected by a defensive fleet and a large contingent of support vessels. They would establish a beachhead in Ireland, and from there conquer enough of England to force Elizabeth's capitulation.
- Parma, in contrast, proposed that a portion of the most battle-hardened fighting force in all of Europe—his famed Army of Flanders—be ferried across the English Channel from the Netherlands to execute the invasion. Parma made little mention of naval support from Spain.
- In a major alteration of the proposals, Philip decided to launch a fleet from Iberia that would protect the English Channel for the movement of Parma's troops to England. The success of this revised strategy relied on the two Spanish forces acting in concert. Philip, however, failed to provide a clear and detailed explanation of how Spain's fleet and Parma's Army of Flanders would link up when the time came.
- The death of Mary, Queen of Scots, offered Philip the chance to claim his Spanish Armada sailed under the banner of righteous vengeance. Mary, who'd lost her own kingdom in part as the result of her inability to undo Protestantism in her homeland, had spent 19 long and uneasy years in England.
- Mary had ensnared herself in plot after plot against her royal cousin, Elizabeth. Throughout her time in England, Mary served as a source of hope to English Catholics, who sought to see her replace Elizabeth and restore England to the old faith. However, in 1586, Elizabeth's principal secretary Lord Burghley was able to secure irrefutable proof that Mary endorsed a plan to assassinate Elizabeth, a crime punishable by death.

- As a result, Elizabeth reluctantly consented to the Scottish queen's execution. Mary was beheaded in February 1587. Ordering the death of an anointed sovereign exposed Elizabeth to international censure. Spanish agents eagerly made much of the illegality of the Scottish queen's death in the courts of Europe.

Conflict Begins

- In response to reports of Spanish plans, in April 1587, Drake launched an audacious and destructive raid on the port of Cadiz. Drake's aggressions prompted Admiral Santa Cruz to sail out to protect the incoming Spanish treasure ships.
- This both weakened the Spanish fleet and positioned its commander to bear the brunt of Philip's displeasure with the delays that pushed the planned invasion back another year. By that point, the wily and undefeated Santa Cruz was dead, and another royal servant, the duke of Medina Sidonia, had been assigned to lead the Armada.
- The Spanish Armada didn't sail in 1587, but vast preparations had been made for it to do so. As a result, food and wine spoiled or was consumed and needed to be continually replaced; ships needed to be redirected for other tasks and were damaged in the process.
- Medina-Sidonia did much work in the spring of 1588 to organize the tangle of paperwork, orders, and provisions for the armada. As a result of his herculean efforts, the fleet was ready at last. On May 28, 1588, the Spanish Armada headed for open water.

Two Fleets

- Among the ranks of the Spanish Armada were ships decades old and designed for other waters. The English fleet, in contrast, had newer, faster, more mobile vessels, and they outnumbered the Spanish. The Spanish Armada entered the English Channel with around 130 ships, while the English had 197.

- The Spanish were critically outgunned in terms of heavy artillery, perhaps to the ratio of 2 to 1. In addition, Spanish gunners dealt with much more difficult equipment. Unlike the English four-wheeled gun carriages that could be easily maneuvered, Spanish carriages had two wheels and lacked easy reloading capabilities.
- Nevertheless, the Spanish Armada was certainly a formidable, well-disciplined war machine, especially when arrayed in its impressive crescent formation. After just two weeks at sea, however, a storm scattered the Spanish fleet and shook the confidence of its captains.
- A week later, on July 29, the English first sighted the armada and put their fleet to sea. According to legend, Francis Drake was bowling when he received word of the Armada's arrival, famously quipping he had plenty of time to finish his game and defeat the Spanish.
- The first skirmish came on July 31, with veteran commander Lord Admiral Charles Howard leading the English fleet. The day's action resulted in minimal damage, although two Spanish ships were lost. Drake targeted one of them, the *Rosario*, believed to be laden with treasure.
- Both fleets took time to reorganize and recover, and Medina Sidonia began to focus on making contact with Parma. He'd sent news of his advance to the commander of the Army of Flanders but hadn't yet received reply.
- Parma had been busy. Like his naval counterpart, Parma had been gathering his resources, carefully dividing his own fleet in several harbors and hiding barges intended to ferry troops to England in various inland waterways to confuse the Dutch.
- The small Dutch navy established a blockade, but they had limited knowledge of Parma's intentions or the exact location of his forces. It is arguable that Parma's attempt to outsmart the Dutch proved decisive in keeping his troops from sailing out to the Armada's protective embrace. To assemble his scattered invasion force would take, in Parma's estimate, six days—time, as it turns out, that the Spanish Armada wouldn't have to spare.

August

- Meanwhile, the Spanish Armada and English fleet resumed hostilities. A perceived ammunition crisis caused the English to break off an engagement on August 2 and another skirmish followed on the 4, but the Armada escaped significant damage and sailed on to Calais, dropping anchor there on August 6. That day marked the long-awaited arrival of word from Parma.
- The news—that Parma needed six more days—was devastating. Medina-Sidonia realized his stalled fleet would be vulnerable to the English. He'd believed Parma would be ready and waiting to launch, a misperception that revealed the greatest flaw in Philip's Armada scheme: no plan for the two forces to meet.
- The English had plans of their own to put the Spanish on the move. Eight ships, loaded with incendiaries, were set ablaze and dispatched into the harbor of Calais on the night of August 7 to disperse the Spanish fleet. Ironically, the fireships did little substantive damage, although many Spanish captains cut anchor in their rush to escape the burning English vessels.
- Renewed discipline and reorganization triumphed over panic, and both fleets readied themselves for what would turn out to be their final clash, the nine-hour Battle of Gravelines. The Spanish fleet sought to keep close to the ports from which Parma's forces were to embark, but they lost the wind and faced deteriorating weather.
- The English moved into close range and began inflicting significant damage to the Spanish ships' hulls. By late afternoon, the Spanish Armada was in disarray; it had lost the Channel, the chance to connect with Parma, and the opportunity for victory.
- Waiting for the Spanish were the treacherous North Sea and the Atlantic, whose storms and hostile inhabitants would see the true ruin of the Spanish Armada. The cut anchor cables at Calais left a wounded Spanish fleet without much-needed assistance for mastering those dangerous waters.



- It was along the coastlines of the British Isles that the Spanish Armada was truly defeated, with 20 to 35 wrecks off the Scottish and Irish coasts and the near-total loss of the crews. Ultimately, fewer than half of the Armada's 130 ships would return to Spanish shores.

Aftermath

- The English credited their escape to no lesser power than God, marking November 24 as a day of thanks. The press churned out celebratory pamphlets trumpeting English righteousness.
- However, the contributions of the English sailors were surprisingly ignored. Almost none of the staggering expense laid out by the English government during the Armada crisis went to injured combatants. It fell to Howard, Drake, and other commanders to organize private relief schemes for those wounded and suffering for queen and country.
- An even bleaker picture emerged in Spain, where the full scope of the armada's failure wasn't known for many weeks. When the news came, it broke the will of the Spanish king.
- The events of 1588 didn't end the war between England and Spain. The defeat of the Spanish Armada is the marquee event in a conflict that dragged on another 15 years, outliving both Philip, who died in 1598, and Elizabeth, who died in 1603. It was their royal successors who made peace in 1604.
- Philip may have yearned for death in November 1588, but he rallied, determined to fight on. Even the armadas continued; an English armada in 1589 ended in failure, as did a number of Spanish plans for follow-up armadas into the 1590s.
- As the war went on, it exhausted royal treasuries and dampened English enthusiasm. In part because of the financial exactions required by foreign war, Elizabeth's popularity sagged during the final years of her reign.

Suggested Reading

Fernandez-Armesto, *The Spanish Armada*.

Martin and Parker, *The Spanish Armada*.

Mattingly, *The Armada*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Were you surprised to learn of the weaknesses of the armada? Why do you think the myth of its overwhelming strength has persisted?
- 2 Were other factors more important for the combatants than religion?
- 3 How would you evaluate Elizabeth of England and Philip of Spain as Renaissance monarchs? To what extent do they exemplify the values and actions of Renaissance monarchs?

LECTURE 40

The Thirty Years' War



Previous lectures have considered the intersection of faith, politics, and war during the European Reformation. This lecture turns to perhaps the greatest of these clashes, an epic struggle called the Thirty Years' War.

Background

- The territories of the Holy Roman Empire were the birthplace of the Protestant Reformation and the site of some of the most intense armed conflicts of the 16th and 17th centuries. It was a land with an identity crisis, a jigsaw of competing states and confessions, long ruled by the Habsburgs—at least in theory.
- In the 16th century, the empire comprised more than 300 principalities—both ecclesiastical and secular—and magistracies. The biggest seven powers had the privilege of voting for the imperial candidate, a medieval practice that created a weak monarchy in the German lands.
- Emperor Charles V (r. 1519–1555) was determined that these lands be purged of Luther's reform. Charles wanted to clamp down on the Reformation, and the failure of the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 to reconcile the leading supporters of reform and the emperor led them to fear for their safety.
- These Protestants made common cause with one another in December at Schmalkald, the town lending its name to the defense league formed there: the Schmalkaldic League. Eight princes, including Landgrave Philip of Hesse (1504–1567) and John the Constant of Saxony (r. 1525–1532), banded together with a number of cities in an alliance, pledging to defend each other.
- The Augsburg Confession, a Lutheran statement of faith presented to the emperor at the Diet in hopes of reconciliation, became a creed for the League itself, with new members required to adhere to it. The League's signatories implicitly supported Philip of Hesse's conclusion that resistance was necessary if a leader abused his authority.

The Ottomans and France

- Another war was brewing, and it was one that put all Christian hands in the empire on deck. The Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566), having dismembered Hungary at the Battle of Mohács in 1526, turned his attention to Vienna.

- Charles needed his Protestants' help—even more in that moment than he needed their religious correction—so he struck a deal. In return for Protestant assistance against the Turks, the emperor made certain concessions. After an imperial victory outside Vienna, the threat passed, and a deal was struck to bring peace between the Turks and the Habsburgs in Austria in 1533.
- Just as that war cooled, another international conflict heated up, this one seeing the French enter an alliance with Suleiman. Suleiman kept Charles busy until the 1540s, further delaying his ability to stem the tide of Lutheranism in the empire.

Charles Takes Action

- By 1546, Luther was dead, and the time had come to take action. Charles concluded an alliance with Pope Paul III (r. 1534–1549). Subsequently, Charles saw a series of victories. Internal family politics in Saxony forced John Frederick I to fight off usurpation at home, and Charles was able to surprise him at the Battle of Mühlberg in April 1547, taking the elector captive.
- John Frederick lost his electoral title and much of his land to his cousin, Moritz, who'd turned on the Protestants and defected to the emperor for the promise of gain. Philip of Hesse was forced to surrender shortly afterwards.
- In theory, the defeat of the Schmalkaldic League should have meant that its members were returned to the Catholic fold. The Augsburg Interim, presented by Charles at the Imperial Diet of Augsburg of 1547–1548, suggested as much. Its idea was to wait on the work of the Council of Trent to conclusively resolve doctrinal matters.
- However, the intentions to create conformity were clear: The policies advanced were resoundingly Catholic, seven sacraments and all. They did offer some concessions to the Protestants, but the more resistant Protestants thought that too much was required of them. They balked at the Interim and its implementation.

- A more Protestant-leaning substitution, the Leipzig Interim, was proposed. It proved as insufficient at satisfying the opponents as its predecessor had been, despite the role of Luther's close colleague Philip Melanchthon in its formulation. The Lutheran movement was beginning to splinter over the issue of compromise, with hardliners rejecting the more accepting position of the so-called Philippists—that is, those who supported Melanchthon.
- Charles wouldn't be able to capitalize on this dissension. Duke Moritz, the Protestant who'd defected from the Schmalkaldic League, switched teams again. Moritz set Melanchthon to work on ensuring conformity to Lutheran doctrine at the University of Wittenberg. He created an alliance to challenge the emperor comprising both Protestant princes in the Empire and French king Henry II (r. 1547–1559).
- Moritz's Protestant army was able to force the emperor's flight from Innsbruck in 1552 and required Charles to sue for peace. The resulting Peace of Augsburg was finalized in 1555. A summary of its effects is this: People who lived in states with a Lutheran prince adhered to the reformers' doctrine; people who lived in states with a Catholic ruler adhered to the old rites. It did not acknowledge other legitimate Christian movements, leaving out Calvinism, which was sweeping through Europe.
- Worn down by decades of conflict, Charles began the process of stepping away from his duties. His son Philip would end up with the Netherlands and the Spanish kingdoms, while his brother Ferdinand stepped in to take the reins of the Holy Roman Empire. This is the origin point of the two branches of the Habsburgs: Spanish in the west and Austrian in the east.

After the Peace

- The Peace of Augsburg held widespread conflict at bay for more than 50 years. However, the failure to recognize Calvinism as a valid choice in the empire was becoming increasingly problematic, as several territories adopted this strand of Protestantism. Catholics and Lutherans continued to squabble over both doctrine and resources.

- Battle lines began firming up in the early 17th century, with the formation of both a Protestant coalition and the Catholic League, led by Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, in anticipation of armed conflict to come. The spark was provided by a problem in Bohemia, an essentially local dispute over the state's elective kingship.
- The choice of the Bohemian estates, Ferdinand of Styria, was the nephew of Holy Roman Emperor Matthias (r. 1612–1619)—a Habsburg and a determined Catholic. Ferdinand wanted Bohemia united in the old faith, something the Protestant nobility vigorously resisted. They met in Prague to reject Ferdinand's policies and infringements on their own authority.
- In May, these protesters threw some of Ferdinand's representatives in the city out the window of the town hall in the famous Defenestration of Prague. Ferdinand's position in Bohemia was damaged.
- The disturbances in Bohemia took on greater significance in the wake of the imperial election that followed Matthias's death. The imperial electors selected Ferdinand as Matthias's successor, but his Bohemian subjects rebelled, deposing him in favor of the Calvinist elector of the Palatinate, Frederick V (1596–1632).
- The Catholic forces crushed the Bohemian revolt at the Battle of White Mountain in November 1620, and rebellious nobles not killed in the rout were executed. Frederick was forced to flee not just Bohemia but the empire altogether.

The War Continues

- By 1622, the first phase of what would become the sprawling Thirty Years' War was over. The drubbing of the Protestants raised flags in the international community. As usual, zeal for the true faith mingled with ambition for the man who stepped up to be Protestant champion, Christian IV of Denmark (r. 1588–1648). Even as he sought to protect his coreligionists, Christian also hoped for the territorial advantages that might come with victory against Catholics in northern imperial lands.

- Standing in Christian's way was one of the greatest military leaders of the age, mercenary general Albrecht von Wallenstein. His army, combined with the forces of the Catholics, delivered victories to the emperor and forced Christian's withdrawal.
- Flush with success, Ferdinand pushed further: In 1629, he issued the Edict of Restitution. Its principles called for a prohibition against Calvinism and the restoration of Catholic lands that had fallen out of church control since 1552. It was an ambitious plan that would have tightened his grip on the empire considerably.
- Ferdinand also made Wallenstein the new duke of Mecklenburg, having decided that the former duke's support of Christian IV was grounds for seizing the land and title and bestowing them where he saw fit. Ferdinand's actions inspired mutiny. Even the Catholic princes thought the emperor had gone too far, and so they joined forces with the Protestants to force the emperor to dismiss Wallenstein.

Later Phases of the War

- Lutheran king Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden stepped up to lead an international coalition against the emperor and his Catholic forces. The Swedish king conclusively defeated the forces of the Catholic League and even ran roughshod over Catholic stronghold Bavaria.
- Wallenstein was hastily recalled, but even he couldn't stem the tide. Although Gustavus Adolphus was killed in 1632, the Swedes fought on with such success that Wallenstein opened secret negotiations with them. His treachery would result not in a kingdom of his own but in his murder, in 1634.
- With the two towering commanders dead, the imperial forces managed to neutralize Protestant momentum. The Protestants turned to the French. Catholic France may seem like an odd choice of ally, but France had actually been in the background of the conflict for a while, sending money to the anti-Habsburg forces out of a survival instinct: Conclusive victory for the Habsburgs threatened France, as it would leave France surrounded by its longtime rivals.

- Open French intervention from 1635 on helped tilt the playing field in the Protestants' favor and helped transform France into the preeminent European power. Under the leadership of Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642) and Cardinal Mazarin (1602–1661), France's war machine became dominant. The Habsburgs convulsed under their burdens and emerged from the conflict greatly reduced in their authority.

Suggested Reading

Friedeburg, *Luther's Legacy*.

Parker, ed., *The Thirty Years' War*.

Tracy, *Emperor Charles V*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Is it most accurate to consider the Thirty Years' War as a religious war, a political conflict, or a combination of the two?
- 2 The chronology of this course concludes in 1648, with the end of the Thirty Years' War. How did the conflict resolve or leave unresolved many of the predominant questions of the Renaissance?

LECTURE 41

Renaissance at Arms: The Military Revolution

his lecture looks at the dramatic changes in the preparations and prosecution of war that coincided with the Renaissance and played out through the wars of religion. Specific areas of focus include new forms of walls, new types of fighters, and changes in training, weapons, and tactics.

The *Trace Italienne*

- The *trace italienne* was a new type of defensive fortification born during the Renaissance. In earlier medieval times, high-walled forts on higher ground than the surrounding territory made it difficult for would-be invaders to attack. Advancements in artillery signaled the need for a new design scheme. The high walls so prized by medieval tacticians and architects offered exposed targets for skilled bombardment. That led to the development of the *trace italienne*.
- Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) was among the first to devise an alternative design in his architectural treatise *De re aedificatoria* in the 1440s. Alberti suggested that defensive walls should be built in jagged lines “like the teeth of a saw” to lessen the damage caused by artillery fire, and he theorized that a star-shaped fortification would be most effective in offering protection.
- Others took up the cause of bringing these designs to fruition. For example, Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1501) serves as a good example. He came into the employment of Federico da Montefeltro, duke of Urbino (1422–1482). Among his charges was the building of numerous fortifications, some of which featured early examples of the star-shaped fortifications that would come to epitomize the *trace italienne*.
- The first new-style fortresses weren’t without their flaws. Their low walls made them more vulnerable than old-style medieval fortifications to surprise attacks because the defenders couldn’t see attackers directly below them. However, strategists figured out that flanking fire from gun towers protruding at angles from the walls combatted that problem. Artillery in these towers could successfully oppose the enemy’s siege weapons while protecting the blind spots of the nearby bastions.
- Defeating one of these strongholds in direct attack proved to be nearly impossible unless the offensive army was lucky enough to find a defender willing to turn traitor. Most often, newly fortified towns and lands could only be taken after lengthy sieges lasting months or even years. Their utility continued into the 19th century, when explosive shells and unprecedented firepower undermined the star-shaped fortresses at last.

Knights

- Renaissance imperatives rewrote the rules of war. For example, in the Hundred Years' War between France and England (1337–1453), mounted knights rode into battle on horseback. Knights required training, skill, and expensive equipment, including swords, shields, and armor. Elite boys and young men trained for this type of combat from an early age.
- At the start of the Renaissance, much of Europe north of the Alps operated under a feudal system that supplied knights for a king's military actions. This organization included lords of noble birth (who owned land), tenants (who rented the land), and serfs (who worked the land). Typically, a king would require a lord to provide a number of men to fight on a campaign, and the lord would in turn draw knights from among his tenants.
- The significant strain of protracted campaigns in the later medieval period was pressuring this system, though. A new form of feudalism—bastard feudalism—was beginning to change things up. It allowed lords to opt out of the customary military service requirements they owed their kings in return for payments kings could use to hire mercenaries instead.
- War was a fair-weather endeavor, since winter brought with it scarcity and illness. Armies regularly headed home during these months, allowing warriors to tend to other business. Since peasants were needed to work the land during the traditional campaign season, most were unable to participate in military service.

New Types of Warriors

- During the Hundred Years' War, mounted warriors weren't alone on the field of battle. Bowmen also had a role, impacting the battle from afar by launching arrows into the affray. Bowmen were significantly cheaper to equip than knights, but their task, too, required a substantial amount of training. The longbow used with great success by the English in the Hundred Years' War even became a national point of pride.

- Heavily armored pikemen also filled the kings' ranks, tightly packed into formation. Their role was largely defensive and required almost no training. They would place the butt of their weapons into the ground, sticking out from the earth at a 45-degree angle, and prop them on the backs of the men in front of them. Their ranks were virtually impenetrable by enemy cavalry and infantry.
- By the early 16th century Swiss, Spanish, German, and Italian armies had shortened the pikes and developed complex maneuvers to utilize pikemen offensively. These operations required more extensive drilling to ensure that the troops moved within their formations.
- South of the Alps, feudalism didn't feature prominently, although lordship did. During the Italian Renaissance, courtiers were expected to perform military service devoted to their princes. Mercenaries were far more in evidence in the south, and mercenary captains—*condottieri*—gained fame, wealth, and even political authority for their abilities.

The 17th-Century Warrior

- The soldier of the mid-17th century was far different specimen than the aforementioned warriors. This later soldier was in many ways a tool for the early modern state. He wasn't born to military pursuits but instead found himself either joining voluntarily, in hopes of bettering his personal condition, or being forced to enter service because his meager station in life or a criminal past limited his opportunities.
- This soldier's training was condensed; he didn't need substantial skills to use his weapons, and most of his exercises involved drilling to ensure precise movement in formation with fellow soldiers. His success was instead dependent upon his unit as whole.
- Muskets and arquebuses had replaced bows and arrows, but even with a tripod to steady the gun, these early firearms were inaccurate. A smooth bore and a round shot meant that even perfectly aimed projectiles took often wildly unpredictable paths.

- Men were reluctant to abandon armor, but the decline in the ethos of the individual warrior and the prioritization of the unit propelled the implementation of indistinguishable clothing. This led to the coming of the military uniform.
- Mercenaries preferred to don some kind of object rather than an entire uniform. A kerchief on the arm could be easily be removed when the troops found fighting for an alternate side was more profitable.



Life of a Soldier

- Life in military service was difficult for 17th-century soldiers. Pay was deposited to captains, who then distributed it to the men once every six months or so. The captains could also give men cheaper or worn-out clothes and charge outrageous prices for victuals, all to their own profit.
- Supplying food was a logistical challenge for monarchs and government officials. After suppliers and officers took their cuts, the remaining funds for victuals were rarely sufficient, and soldiers were required to live off the land, to the frustration and impoverishment of the local populations. Medicine didn't keep up with the advances in technology, so limbs mangled by new weapons had to be sacrificed or remain useless.
- The loyalties of a 17th-century soldier were far more fluid than those of a feudal knight bound to his lord. The Protestant Reformation brought about religious turmoil that drove men to join armies in support of their individual confessions, even if they didn't match that of their prince or magistrates.
- Men who hadn't spent their lives training for military service often found the conditions of life in the military and the horrors of battle unbearable. Desertion was common.
- Many monarchs found it a better alternative to hire mercenaries than raise troops from amongst their subjects. Although this was expensive, it alleviated governments from the administrative nightmare of recruiting, training, and deploying soldiers. These men played the system to their advantage, changing sides should they decide an alternate alliance was more profitable.

Military Might

- Early modern tacticians and the monarchs and officials they worked for understood that gunners and archers were more effective in larger numbers. Some states' militaries increased tenfold between 1500 and 1700. Phillip II of Spain dominated Europe in the 16th century with an army of probably no more than 40,000 men. Only 100 years later, Louis XIV of France maintained an army of 400,000.

- More gunners and archers required more bows and more guns, which in turn needed more arrows and more bullets. Someone was going to have to foot the bill. The states whose debt and tax structure could be retooled to support such expenditures, particularly Britain and France, would surge to the fore as European superpowers. Spain fell behind.

Gunpowder

- The development of large gunpowder weaponry in the 15th century touched many elements and aspects of the military enterprise. Gunpowder was made of a combination of charcoal, sulfur, and saltpeter (potassium nitrate).
- Gunpowder exposed the weaknesses of older fortifications, whose high walls failed to offer significant protection against canon fire. A boom in big guns commenced. For example, Mons Meg, a gun cast on behalf of Philip the Good of Burgundy in 1449, weighed 8.5 tons and fired a 500-millimeter, 400-pound shot.



- Towns and castles accessible by water were the first targets of large, unwieldy gunpowder weapons. Because these guns were too massive to transport easily over land, they were quickly replaced by smaller, more maneuverable artillery. By the middle of the 15th century, vast numbers of them were being used to bombard fortifications throughout Europe.

Suggested Reading

Black, *Beyond the Military Revolution*.

Jacob and Visoni-Alonzo, *The Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe*.

Parker, *The Military Revolution*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 Which played the bigger role in shaping Renaissance warfare: technological innovation or institutional and political changes?
- 2 How did armed conflict support and challenge the Renaissance quest for a good life?

LECTURE 42

Renaissance and the Birth of Modern Science



his lecture examines the intersection of Renaissance values and patronage with the new ways of thinking about the natural environment and the universe that influenced the Scientific Revolution. Partnerships and animosities developed between educational pursuits and institutions, religious and secular authorities, print culture, and more.

Nicolaus Copernicus

- The year 1543 was the year of first publication for a text with groundbreaking ramifications, titled *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*). In it, Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) put forward a theory that streamlined the previously used Ptolemaic system of planetary motion by swapping the Earth for the Sun as the center of the cosmos.
- He posited that the Earth rotated each day on its axis and revolved around the Sun each year. It was that daily rotation that explained why the Sun seemed to rise and set and why the stars seemed to move on an Earth that itself seemed unmoving. Copernicus also theorized that the Earth's own motion through space resulted in the longheld perception of planets moving backward.
- There were limits to his theories, but the Copernican challenge to medieval cosmology represented a paradigm shift. Copernican innovation generated a radical alteration in perception that enabled others to understand their world in new and different ways.

Medieval Views

- The medieval view of the cosmos was as magisterial as it was complex. Its very orderliness and intricacies suited Christian sensibilities and sensitivities in key ways. The heavens, as rendered by intellectual authorities, were wondrous to behold. They provided a sure sign of the omnipotence of God and the great care God put into creation.
- The medieval understanding of the universe also placed Earth at the center of the cosmos, which supported the centrality of man. The chief authorities for this understanding were Aristotle (384–322 BCE) and Ptolemy.
- Medieval thinkers engaged and refined Aristotelian and Ptolemaic ideas. The process of integrating this ancient pagan view of the cosmos into a Christian framework animated a number of great medieval thinkers, including Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274).

- Renaissance thinkers, however, explored the existence of ancient alternatives to Aristotelian ideas. Perhaps the most important alternative was Aristotle's teacher, Plato (429–347 BCE). Renaissance created an updated version of Platonic thought of their own, identified as neo-Platonism.
- Unlike Aristotle, who prized observation of reality, Plato had encouraged a figuration of reality—one that looked beyond appearances to discover true knowledge. This is the business of Platonic forms—that is, the notion that physical reality represents a pale reflection of ideals that existed outside the mortal realm, occupying a plane of heavenly perfection.
- Renaissance Platonists turned enthusiastically to the study of philosophy, mathematics, music, and classical languages in their quest to uncover truth and to understand the mechanics of nature. The quest led to a new urge to quantify nature and to subject it to the rigors of experimentation. Received tradition was rejected in favor of a more hands-on approach to learning.

New Science

- Science in the hands of thinkers and experimenters was designed to be purposeful and practical. England's Francis Bacon (1561–1626) was an important proponent of the new empirical science. His government post, as lord chancellor under James I (r. 1603–1625), meant that he had the ear of the monarch. Bacon's celebration of science as doing God's work was designed to encourage the king to make science a state initiative.
- In his *Novum Organum*, published in 1620, Bacon proposed a new method to replace Aristotle's *Organon*. Bacon's New Method prioritized inductive reasoning, the process of generalizing the accumulation of quality factual information through observation. This process of employing specific evidence to draw general conclusions is seminal to the development of the scientific method and to the creation of a new intellectual consensus.

- An alternate method of pursuing knowledge and an alternate conception of its value were receiving powerful articulation in the work of Bacon's contemporary, Frenchman René Descartes (1596–1650). Descartes believed that scientific thought should operate with clear, irrefutable knowledge derived not from mindless adherence to tradition but instead from reason.

Patronage

- Wealthy men and women subsidized scientific discovery. They did so for many of the same motivations that drove the patronage of artists and architects: It was a form of elite conspicuous consumption.
- Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546–1601), hailing from an aristocratic background, was lucky enough to be financially able to subsidize his own work. The most notable fruits of his study was his correction of key Copernican errors about planetary motion, although Tycho, too, had his limits.
- Tycho also benefitted from extensive patronage: In 1576, Frederick II (r. 1559–1588) of Denmark granted Tycho an island to serve as a base for his astronomical work. The king also provided him an annual allowance. Twenty years later, Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II appointed Tycho as imperial mathematician, a post that earned him prestige and a number of perks.
- Tycho himself, by virtue of his extensive landholding and personal fortune, served as a patron to other scholars. Among the most notable of those who benefitted from Tycho's support was German Johannes Kepler (1571–1630).
- It was Kepler who did the most to validate the Copernican heliocentric theory, through the formulation of the three basic laws of planetary motion: He argued that planetary orbits are elliptical, that the velocity of planetary motion is not fixed but variable, and that the square of the orbital period of a planet is proportional to the cube of the mean distance from the Sun. This created a cosmos dictated by mathematical principles.

Religion

- Science eventually came to tangle with religion. Scripture held that the Earth was unmoved and the planets were in motion. The Old Testament prophet Joshua famously commanded the Sun to stop, for example. Church authorities cited this and other biblical passages as validation of the geocentric theory.
- However, this was a time when people began to challenge the authority of the traditional church. As Copernicus was refining his heliocentric theory in the early decades of the 16th century, Martin Luther was on the cusp of opening the floodgates of controversy in contesting the papal church's monopoly on knowledge.
- Many modern scholars have noted the significance of the timing of the Scientific Revolution with regard to the Reformation. Protestant lands have been seen as producing the greatest innovations in scientific endeavor, in part because Protestants were able to critique the intellectual status quo in ways their Catholic counterparts were not, but the formula isn't that simple.
- The Roman Church's condemnation of Galileo (1564–1642) in the 17th century, though, demonstrated the slippery slope considered to exist between science and blasphemy in Catholic territories. Despite counting Pope Urban VIII among his many patrons, Galileo's pointed support for heliocentrism in 1632's *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* couldn't be taken lightly by the church, and Galileo paid a steep price for his critique.

Science in the World

- The work of those investigating nature and the heavens above had very practical real-world applications during the Scientific Revolution, just as Bacon had wanted. Those experimenting with instruments of navigation and calculating distances, for example, helped lay the framework for the European Age of Discovery.

- Women also played many roles in the Scientific Revolution. Their activities in the craft traditions led to scientific innovation, while wealthy women participated in salon society. Women wrote and even published works of natural philosophy; Englishwoman Margaret Cavendish (1623–1673) stands as one example.
- The story of women is largely absent in the master narrative of the Scientific Revolution. However, more recent scholarship is casting a wider net to uncover the other participants who joined the revolution in their own ways.

Suggested Reading

Dear, *Revolutionizing the Sciences*.

Kuhn and Hacking, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

Mayer, *The Roman Inquisition*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What do you consider science, and how does that definition differ from its early modern theory and practice?
- 2 Which Renaissance scientific ideas or practices do you think have had the biggest impact on history?
- 3 Do you think broad historical labels like Scientific Revolution are useful? How are they problematic?

LECTURE 43

Renaissance and Magic: Witchcraft

he book *Malleus Maleficarum* (*Hammer of Witches*) is often heralded as the book that started one of the most infamous episodes in European history: the great early modern witch hunt. Between 1450 and 1700, the criminalization of witchcraft sparked trials that stretched across Europe. Although estimates vary widely, a consensus has settled at somewhere between 100,000 to 200,000 standing accused, with between 40,000 to 60,000 executed.

Background on *Malleus Maleficarum*

- *Malleus Maleficarum* was the work of a German Dominican inquisitor named Heinrich Kramer (1430–1505). One of Kramer's fellow Dominicans, Jacob Sprenger (1436–1495), was later identified as a coauthor, probably in a bid to add sufficient gravitas to the book and to enhance its appeal. *Malleus Maleficarum* had its publication debut in 1487 and would go on to appear in a minimum of 36 editions between that date and 1669, published in a variety of languages and locations.
- Belief in the existence of practitioners of magic—individuals who were thought to be able to wield supernatural power—stretched back to ancient times. Even after the coming of Christianity, the use of magic had been tolerated during the Middle Ages.
- Those earlier attitudes eroded in the face of theories that firmly aligned practitioners of magic—witches—and witchcraft with the Devil. Growing fears about the dangers of magical power and its exercise began to coalesce in new ways.
- The key to witches' power, in this new formulation, was the Satanic pact, a ritual binding of the witch to the Devil. This contract, cast as a perversion of the Christian covenant, put the individual witch firmly in league with the Devil, whose ultimate goal was believed to be the undermining of the Christian faith.
- Learned men who studied such matters were increasingly considering witches soldiers of Satan. Those developments led to the work of Kramer and Sprenger. Their book was a response to frustrations at the inability to bring suspected witches to justice.
- In the years leading up to *Malleus Maleficarum*, the two had been unable to secure the support of local clerics in northern German-speaking lands to investigate witchcraft. When they petitioned Innocent IV (r. 1484–1492) for aid, the pope's response took the form of the 1484 bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus*.

- The decree affirms Kramer and Sprenger's authority "as inquisitors of heretical pravity." The bull sounds the papal alarm against the perils of leaving witchcraft unchecked and reads as a ringing endorsement from the pope of the activities of inquisitors seeking witchcraft's eradication.

Contents and Effects of the Manual

- Innocent's words would end up having a privileged place in *Malleus Maleficarum* itself, since the bull was published as the opening for the manual. The manual itself is encyclopedic in its scope and a difficult read, but its overall message is this: Witches are real; they are dangerous and powerful, thanks to their allegiance with the Devil; and they need to be stopped at any cost.
- Kramer also offers practical advice for identifying, trying, and convicting witches. Failure wasn't an option: The spiritual health of Christendom depended on success. Legal niceties, such as they existed in the 15th century, would have to be abandoned when circumstances required.
- Kramer's fellow inquisitors were rather cool in their initial reception to his book, and as a result, it didn't actually become a standard manual used in inquisitorial courts. However, its influence can be identified in other early modern texts categorized as demonologies—books by learned men that expounded on the powers of witches, the peril in which they placed good Christians, and the relationship between the Devil and his witch adherents.

Trials

- In the 15th century, inquisitors turned to the business of identifying and punishing witches, launching trials in the Swiss cantons and the German-speaking lands. The coming of the Reformation in the early 16th century slowed the tide of prosecutions, in no small part because the cracking of the Christian consensus presented its own pressing concerns. Witchcraft trials would rise again in frequency after midcentury and continue for over 100 years in many European lands before subsiding as a cause of official concern in the later 17th century.

- The shattering of Christian unity and authority represented by the Reformation had a powerful impact on the European witch hunt. Charges of witchcraft offered a way for Catholics and Protestants to attack each other. Witches, who'd been previously conceived as members of an anti-Christian sect, could be re-conceptualized as believers in the wrong sort of Christianity.

Secular Authority

- Secular authorities became involved in the witch-hunting business. For example, in Elizabethan England, as elsewhere, gradations of witchcraft existed, and so different offenses warranted different methods of correction.
- Anyone responsible for causing the death of another was guilty of a felony, a crime that came with a death sentence. Anyone who caused harm but not death was subject to imprisonment for one year, turns in the pillory (a public shaming device), and the requirement to confess his or her errors. If a second act of harm occurred, it was a felony, meaning execution.
- Government officials worried over plots that targeted rulers, as when Elizabeth's chief astrologer, John Dee, was suspected of witchcraft. Dee's case is a useful reminder of the uneasy overlap between science and superstition in early modern Europe. The modern chasm that exists between the rational and irrational didn't yet exist.

Accusations on the Ground

- Along with religious and political concerns, the witchcraft hysteria also reflected social and economic concerns. At the non-elite level, witchcraft was about interpersonal and community tensions. It was about individuals who distrusted and disliked one another.

- An examination of the extant trial materials alongside the popular print images and text that sensationalized witchcraft reveals that the overwhelming majority of actual witchcraft cases didn't result from elite accusations. They may have authorized the labeling of witchcraft as a crime, but it was non-elites who were accusing one another of witchcraft.
- Somewhere between 75 and 85 percent of those accused of witchcraft were women. Some scholars have tagged misogyny as a key cause of witch hunts, suggesting a systematic fear and hatred of women as being at the root of accusations. It was, after all, male authorities who created the laws, prosecuted the accused, and condemned the convicted.
- However, in many areas, women accused other women. Charges of witchcraft tended to stem from life processes assigned by nature or custom to women, such as childbirth, childcare, and food preparation. When something went wrong, guilt over potential charges of neglect could be displaced on other caregivers.
- The typical witch, if one can be said to exist, was an old, irascible woman. Often impoverished, without a male authority figure to rule over her, she quarreled with her neighbors, and they remembered her curses or ill wishes in those all-too-frequent moments when misfortune struck.
- Over time, those authorities responsible for the prosecutorial mechanisms grew increasingly hesitant about accepting evidence of witchcraft. The use of torture was recognized as producing false confessions, and stories alleging encounters with the Devil were treated with doubt. While accusations continued, convictions slowed. During the 18th century, most of the laws criminalizing witchcraft were repealed.
- The witchcraft centuries were marked by profound political, economic, and religious crisis. When those crises intersected with prevailing ideas about gender and the authorization of the law to target suspected malefactors, the unthinkable became reality. When fear and prejudice ruled in Renaissance Europe, extremism wasn't usually far behind.

Suggested Reading

Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*.

Roper, *Witch Craze*.

Seitz, *Witchcraft and Inquisition in Early Modern Venice*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 How did various Renaissance circumstances and values promote the European witch hunts?
- 2 How does the link between women and witchcraft contribute to our understanding of gender in early modern society?
- 3 Witches and magic permeate popular culture today. Why is the image of the witch so enduring?

LECTURE 44

Renaissance Encounters with Islam



his lecture examines the relationship between Christians and Muslims during the early modern period. Faith imperatives played a profound role in the interactions of the Christian and Islamic states. However, faith wasn't the only factor that mattered: Complex motivations were also at work when it came to how rulers, merchants, and clerics understood their rivals and their world.

The Fall of Constantinople

- The city of Constantinople stood for centuries as the wonder of the world. It featured thriving trade and treasures that impressed 12th- and 13th-century visitors. Located on the southern tip of Anatolia, the city was surrounded by water on three sides, offering protection.
- In addition, a wall protected its landward side. On Constantinople's seaward sides, its defenders built sea walls. The defenders could use Greek fire, an incendiary petroleum-based substance that would burn, even on water itself. This had helped make Constantinople a powerhouse for hundreds of years.
- By the 15th century, however, Constantinople was a shadow of its former self. The Black Death had ravaged its population during the 14th century. Centuries of warfare had also eroded the city. Attackers included the Latin Christians, who'd sacked and then ruled the city during the Fourth Crusade in 1204, and the Persian, Arab, and Turk empires from the east.
- On May 29, 1453, after a two-month siege, the city fell to the Ottoman Turks. The Ottoman Empire, a dynamic Islamic state founded at the turn of the 14th century, achieved its victory under the leadership of Sultan Mehmed II (1432–1481), also known as Mehmed the Conqueror.
- The republics of Genoa and Venice, who enjoyed substantial trading privileges there, had aided the desperate defenders in Constantinople. However, their forces were no match for the cannons of the Ottomans.
- People who prized classical learning keenly felt the loss of the city—it was the last remaining lifeline to the civilizations of the ancient world. Equally alarming was the elimination of Constantinople as a Christian bastion in the east, even though that position of Constantinople as a vital buffer between Christian and Islamic empire had long been more fictional than real.
- Popes Nicholas V (r. 1447–1455) and Pius II (r. 1458–1462), both Renaissance patrons and sympathetic to displaced Byzantine intellectuals, made noises about a crusade to retake the Greek Christian

capital city, but those calls didn't develop into military action. There was, however, grave concern among European states about the danger Islam posed, and that concern would help to shape key developments of the Renaissance and Reformation centuries.

The Iberian Peninsula

- For 700 years, the Christian reconquest (or *Reconquista*) put Iberia on the frontlines of a conflict between faiths and political rivals. Fledgling Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms wrested lands away from the caliphate of Córdoba. Royal power couple Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile completed the Christian conquests in 1492, with the fall of Granada.
- Even after completion, the *Reconquista* project continued to cast an important shadow over life in the Iberian states. For centuries, the peninsula was the site of armed conflict: Christians fought Christians, Muslims fought Muslims, and Christians and Muslims fought each other. A warrior culture pervaded Iberian consciousness.
- The aftereffects of that Christian conquest were substantial. Victory transformed the landscape when Christian kings enlisted the crusading military orders, including the Templars, to take up the work of defense against a resurgence of Muslim power. Their great castles safeguarded Christian settlements.
- In their newly acquired lands, Christian princes and kings enacted a massive program of resettlement, seeding the ground with Christians. Another factor was that Muslims had occupied these lands before Christian incursions, and now a new reality was going to have to take the place of armed conflict.
- When Christian princes captured lands formerly administered and still inhabited by Muslims, those in residence were required by Islamic policy to leave and settle elsewhere. Christian decrees were equally explicit; Muslims were to be expelled from Christian lands. In practice, though, hundreds of thousands of Muslims stayed put, even outnumbering Christians in some areas.

- Strict laws emerged to define the interactions of the practitioners of the two faith traditions, but the people did find ways to coexist out of practical necessity. However, as the early modern rulers sought to enhance their authority through the enforcement of religious uniformity, the level of toleration for all forms of religious deviance dipped. The Iberian Muslims who sought integration found their efforts met with the Inquisition as the lines between faiths hardened.

Suleiman I

- Constantinople made a nice prize for the Turks, but its conquest wasn't the final stage of a long struggle. The Ottoman Turkish Empire had already secured Thrace, Bulgaria, and Macedonia by the time Mehmed II's forces took Constantinople. They defeated the Serbs next, and then it was on to the Greek peninsula, Herzegovina, and Albania.
- In the 16th century, under the command of Suleiman I (r. 1520–1566), the Ottoman army pushed into Hungary. In August 1526 at the Battle of Mohács, Suleiman crushed the Hungarian forces. King Louis II was also killed in the battle, and since he had no heirs, a power vacuum loomed. A Christian race was on to try to salvage some position in Hungary against the Turkish advance.



- A three-way partition emerged, with Archduke Ferdinand of Austria carrying the day in Bohemia and a western zone of Hungary. Suleiman and the Turks took the center. To the east in Transylvania, Count John Zápolya (1490–1540), elected by the Hungarian nobility as their king, was in control. In his bid for authority, Zápolya brokered a deal with Suleiman that made Hungary a subject state to the Ottomans.

Ottoman Rule

- The Ottomans failed at their bid to take Vienna 1529, but the threat they posed helped scuttle Charles V's plans to deal with the Protestants in his empire. More advances came in the 1530s and 1540s. Eventually, millions of European Christians would be subject to Ottoman rule. Christian boys were pressed into military service on behalf of the empire, and these Janissaries would play a key role in the Ottoman subjugation of other Muslims.
- However, the Ottomans didn't force conversion, in part for reasons of money. Christians who were allowed to practice their faith paid higher taxes, and so it didn't make good economic policy to lose out on that revenue.

Philip II

- The reality of the Turks had to be borne by the European powers, and most rulers grudgingly made peace with that. However, Spain's Philip II (r. 1556–1598) did not. He also possessed the throne of Portugal after 1580, and in both Spain and Portugal, Muslims were believed to have plans to undermine Christendom from the inside.
- Attempts to suppress the Muslims in Granada led to rebellion in 1568. The rebellion was crushed by Spanish forces under Philip's half-brother, Don Juan of Austria (1547–1578). The reprisals against the rebels were designed to prohibit a repeat bid for autonomy, with tens of thousands of Moors expelled from Granada and thinly redistributed throughout the peninsula so as not to allow for coordinated efforts at renewed resistance.

- Philip's efforts in the Mediterranean show a similar desire for victory against enemies of his Catholic faith and for security of his territories, although the road to success was far rockier than in Granada. A Spanish fleet was humiliated by a surprise Turkish attack in 1560 in North Africa that saw the capture of thousands of Spaniards.
- Later, in 1570, when Selim II seized Cyprus, then under the control of the Venetian republic, the time had come to take decisive action. Throwing in with Venice and the pope, Spain participated in a joint naval expedition to recover the island. The victor in Granada was Don Juan once again.
- In October, the fleet of the Christian forces engaged the Ottomans at Lepanto, off the east coast of Greece, and delivered a conclusive victory. The Turkish navy was smashed, with just a handful of Christian ships lost.
- The Turks reorganized and rebuilt, and the Christian coalition broke down. Venice pursued a separate peace with the Turks, and the Turks went back on the attack, capturing Tunis with its reconstructed fleet in 1574.
- Regardless, the Spanish victory at Lepanto turned out to have lasting significance, as it neutralized the Ottoman threat to the western Mediterranean in a way that allowed Philip to direct his attention elsewhere. A cautious peace with the Turks was secured in 1578.

Suggested Reading

O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain*.

Philippides, ed. and trans., *Mehmed II the Conqueror and the Fall of the Franco-Byzantine Levant to the Ottoman Turks*.

Woodhead and Kunt, ed., *Suleyman the Magnificent and His Age*.

LECTURE 45

Renaissance and Exploration: Motives



his lecture looks at how the values, motivations, and conflicts that shaped aspects of Europe's age of rebirth also fostered preconditions for European exploration. Factors included curiosity about the natural world, a desire for power, technological advances, and an underlying quest for glory and riches.

Different Drives

- Renaissance intellectuals prioritized experiential learning. Spurred by the works of the ancients, they exhibited significant curiosity about the natural world. They wanted to unlock the mysteries of the physical universe.
- The quest for classical texts that marked the period of rebirth resulted in the rediscovery and promotion of a treasure trove of Greek, Roman, and Egyptian learning. The geographies of Strabo and Ptolemy and other theoreticians came into wider circulation, for example, and piqued the curiosity of navigators and those who would support their voyages.
- Religion was a pivotal motivation for European exploration as well. For example, by the 15th century, Spain and Portugal had long been engaged in a holy war on the Iberian Peninsula. They saw their maritime activities as an extension of the struggle against Islam.
- Another drive was money and fame: For some men, new lands beyond Christendom's borders offered the potential of prosperity and the chance to win renown. That was an attractive prospect for those who faced declining opportunities at home in Europe due to changing economic and political realities.
- Additionally, the fall of Byzantium in 1453 to the Ottoman Turks had a profound religious impact on Christian Europe. As the last Christian bastion and symbolic buffer eroded, the Turks felt uncomfortably close and threatening to European states.
- With the Turks in command of the overland routes that connected Christendom with the empires in the east, the trade that brought silks, pepper, cinnamon, and other luxury commodities to European markets was jeopardized. It was in part the exorbitant fees needed to secure such goods for a growing consumer base that motivated merchants and traders to seek alternate methods for access.

New Information and Technology

- The recent reintroduction to European audiences of Ptolemy's *Geography*, having been translated into Latin at the start of the 15th century, convinced some that more advantageous means of profiting from the luxury trade existed. Ptolemy's omission of the Americas in his view of the world suggested that the eastern origin of highly prized items was close enough that it made sense to go there directly and avoid the Ottoman-controlled Middle East entirely.
- That impulse would drive both Spanish and Portuguese explorers, although they would sail off in opposite directions in hopes of reaching their destination. Their efforts were boosted by numerous technological developments and navigational aids. Ships, for example, could hold more cargo, though space for the crews was more cramped.
- The new ships were much better equipped for the more challenging waters beyond the Mediterranean. The vessels relied on sails rather than rowers. With the adoption of the lateen sail, ships could be maneuvered successfully against the wind. They could also be outfitted with cannons.
- A number of navigational instruments—the magnetic compass, the astrolabe, and the sternpost rudder among them—increased mariners' knowledge of their location and their control over their vessels. This, in turn, allowed for the increased accuracy of maps, as skilled cartographers were able to use the knowledge they gathered from navigators to correct errors and omissions.



China

- While efforts were ramping up in Europe, another civilization stood on the cusp of operationalizing the first seaborne empire of the early modern world. A series of voyages of the Ming dynasty's Treasure Fleet propelled China to the center of the world stage. These expeditions were helmed by the Muslim eunuch admiral Zheng He (1371–1433) and sponsored by Zhu Di, the Yongle emperor (r. 1402–1424).
- Seven massive fleets set out between 1405 and 1433. Roughly 65 huge Chinese junks were accompanied by more than 250 smaller vessels and staffed with more than 28,000 men.
- The Chinese voyages were bound up with matters of state. The Yongle emperor was actually a usurper. Zhu Di was a younger son of the Ming dynasty's founder, the Hongwu emperor. By virtue of his place in the succession, he didn't inherit the imperial throne.
- Zhu Di was not content to be a prince. He seized the throne from his young nephew, the Jianwen emperor (r. 1398–1402), who was killed in the palace coup. However, rumors of his nephew's survival plagued the new ruler. Part of Admiral Zheng He's orders was to investigate reported sightings of the Jianwen emperor in nearby lands, where he was believed by supporters to be preparing to stage a comeback.
- The admiral and his men didn't find the Jianwen emperor, but they did possess imperial favor. They spread Chinese influence throughout the South Pacific and Indian Ocean basin, reaching the Arabian Peninsula and the east coast of Africa.
- However, the Treasure Fleet and the trading and tributary networks it built were incredibly short-lived. The death of the Yongle emperor and the eclipse of the eunuch faction at court by the Confucian scholar-officials doomed the great maritime project of the early Ming dynasty. The voyages of the Treasure Fleet were suspended, and many of the ships and records of the expeditions destroyed.

- Note that China was the power player in Asia both before and after the voyages. While the fleet's maritime activities brought China into contact with distant lands and goods and peoples, there was no geopolitical impetus for capitalizing on those connections.
- In the eyes of Confucian officials, China didn't need overseas territory to get a leg up on the competition because there wasn't any competition. When the Yongle emperor died, these traditional intellectual elites were poised to catapult back into prominence. Denouncing the activities of their eunuch rivals at court was a way to dismiss their importance and to reduce their contributions to the Ming state.

Suggested Reading

Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar*.
Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas*.
Russell, *Prince Henry the Navigator*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What reasons did people from different walks of life have for taking to the seas?
- 2 Why didn't China feel as compelled to establish overseas links as its European counterparts?

LECTURE 46

Renaissance and Exploration: New Horizons



his lecture examines the consequences of contact for the first two European states to embark on the building of overseas empire. The embarkations of Spain and Portugal involved an intersection of Renaissance influences and imperial ambitions.

Portuguese Exploration

- The Portuguese took the first steps in what would open a new age in world history. Royal patronage propelled this exploration. The domination of overland trade routes by the Ottoman Turks in the Middle East incentivized the search for alternate means of getting desired luxury items to European lands from the east.
- After the victory of the Portuguese over their North African rivals at Ceuta in 1415, steady progress was made in exploring the west coast of Africa and nearby Madeira, the Azores, and the Cape Verde islands. In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias rounded the tip of Africa.
- A decade later, four ships under the command of Vasco da Gama and the sponsorship of Manuel I would outdo Dias by sailing into the Indian Ocean and make landfall at Calicut in India. One more decade later, the Portuguese reached China.
- The chief architect of Portugal's emerging presence in the east was Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque. His capture of coastal centers in India and at Hormuz, on the horn of the Arabian Peninsula, between 1510 and 1515 would be vital to establishing a network of Portuguese outposts from which to conduct trade.
- However, Portugal couldn't helm a major colonial effort, conquering rival empires and settling its people elsewhere. Portugal would instead rely on trading posts and deals with indigenous populations—or, absent the ability to secure favorable terms, the application of targeted military force. Even these limited actions were enough to touch off hostilities with Muslim merchants who had dominated the trade before the arrival of Portuguese ships.
- To protect their shipping interests, the Portuguese established four major centers in the east. The first was at Goa, on the Malabar Coast of India. On the west coast of what is now Sri Lanka and was then Ceylon, Colombo became an important post. Malacca, on the Malaysian Peninsula, served as another key settlement, although it and Colombo would be lost to the Dutch in the 17th century.



- Macau, off the coast of China, would outlast even Goa, which returned to India in 1976. Macau was Portuguese until the final days of the 20th century, and was returned to China in 1999. These centers were augmented by smaller hubs of Portuguese influence along a huge expanse of coastline along the edges of Africa, Arabia, India, and beyond.

Columbus

- One of the people in the bustling capital of Portugal as these first expeditions were returning from India was the son of a Genoese weaver named Christopher Columbus (1451–1506). Like many others, Columbus was drawn in by the lure of riches in the east.
- Columbus was heavily influenced by classical texts. He owned printed copies of Pliny's *Natural History*, Ptolemy's *Geography*, the *Travels* of Marco Polo, and an early 15th-century study of the populations of the world entitled *Imago Mundi* by French cleric Pierre D'Ailly.
- The descriptions of Africa and Asia and their people offered by these books mingled with Columbus's experience of the heady atmosphere in Portugal. The combination drove him to embark on his own quest for riches, with the idea of sailing west to reach the east being inspired by his reading.

- Columbus eventually won the patronage of Ferdinand and Isabella, as the Spanish sovereigns were flush with the success of finalizing the *Reconquista* in Granada in 1492. Columbus's activities—the discovery of what was quickly realized to be a New World—touched off an urgency to settle the matter of who would get what.

Dividing the New World

- Pope Alexander VI acted as chief negotiator to broker a deal between Portuguese king João II and Ferdinand and Isabella. Alexander's settlement was preferential to Spain, dividing the globe into eastern and western halves at a line just beyond the Azores. The Portuguese objected and successfully pushed the line about 1,000 miles westward into the Atlantic, claiming to need more sailing space to catch the winds required for their journeys southward to the cape of Africa.
- The result was the Treaty of Tordesillas, dated June 7, 1494 and ratified by the monarchs shortly afterward. Portugal's wise adjustment would come to net them Brazil, discovered in 1500 courtesy of an expedition led by Dias and Pedro Alvares Cabral that drifted significantly off course from its African trajectory.
- The line established by Tordesillas didn't hold fast in the east. Incursions in 1518 by Ferdinand Magellan gave Spain its own important foothold in the east, in the Philippines. Magellan was a Portuguese captain sailing under the support of the newly crowned king of Spain, Charles I (also Holy Roman Emperor Charles V).

Spain in the New World

- Spain directed considerable energy in the New World, forcibly dominating the Caribbean and bringing down massive indigenous empires in Central and South America—the Aztec and the Inca. Hernán Cortés led the conquering of the Aztec Empire, and Francisco Pizarro helmed the conquest of the Inca Empire.

- Spanish expeditions in the late 15th and early 16th centuries set off in the shadow of the Reconquista. With exploration, many of the same impulses that drove the long process of expelling the Muslims from Iberia were turned outward, to the lands and peoples beyond the sea. The heirs of those who made their business that of Reconquista in generations past became new conquerors, the conquistadors.
- The geography of aggression may have changed, but the core impulses remained. The imperative of acquiring land and seeding conquered ground with adherents of the true faith was the common element in both processes.

Administering Empire

- The conquistadors could win the land, but they struggled to administer it effectively. The post-conquest career of conquistador Cortés makes a good case to the point. Rivals sought to undermine his authority as the newly appointed governor general of Mexico and charged him with malfeasance. After a series of political and military setbacks, Cortés returned to Spain for his remaining years, leaving behind the lands he'd won for the crown.
- The solution to the monumental task of colonial management for the Spaniards was the encomienda system. It involved forced labor to carry out the many tasks that brought enrichment to the crown and its subjects at home and abroad. It was tantamount to the enslavement of the indigenous populations.
- The encomienda system created order in this new Spanish world, but they also provoked a significant and protracted crisis of conscience at home. The desire for good management, Spanish authority, and financial gain clashed with the other chief work of Spanish empire: the making of Christians.

- The task of conversion would end up becoming the work of the religious orders of the Jesuits, Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans. Alleviating the ill treatment embedded in the encomienda system was the project that Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas devoted his life to trying to tackle.
- In 1537, Pope Paul III (r. 1534–1549) issued *Sublimis Deus*, in part at the instigation of Las Casas. The bull ratified the position that the indigenous people were “truly men” and that they “desire exceedingly” to receive the teachings of Catholicism.
- In 1542, Charles V issued the New Laws, a sweeping set of injunctions intent on curbing abuses in the encomienda system. Slavery was prohibited, and royal inquiries were to be made into instances of ill treatment. However, those subject to the laws were mutinous, claiming that productive activities would grind to a halt without the compulsions of the encomienda system. The laws ended up proving impossible to enforce, but the questions continued.

Suggested Reading

Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*.
 Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*.
 Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*.
 Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What were the differences between Portuguese and Spanish drives for exploration?
- 2 What were the differences in the results of each country's explorations?

LECTURE 47

Early Modern Power: The New Global Rivalries



The previous lecture discussed the Iberian states surging ahead in the new race for global empire. However, European states would join the competition, making the quest for new horizons a wider European phenomenon. This lecture considers the developments of three states—the Dutch Republic, Britain, and France—in an age of change.

The Dutch Republic

- The Dutch Republic combined constitutionalism and commercialism to become a 17th-century powerhouse. Long before its independence from Spain was formally recognized in 1648, the Dutch had established the foundations of a state system that balanced power among its provinces in the Estates General under the executive authority of the House of Orange.
- The stability of that state, along with the Low Countries' traditional industriousness and new commercial banking and investment practices, fostered explosive economic growth. Amsterdam became Europe's financial capital. It attracted foreigners and foreign investment, and offered cheap credit. Dutch shipping, too, began dominating world trade.
- The Dutch Republic ate into Spanish and Portuguese holdings and emerged at the center of a web of trade that stretched from one side of the globe to the other. Sugar and tobacco came from the Americas, wool from the British Isles and Iberia, timber and furs from northern Europe, and grain from eastern Europe.
- From the east came spices, silks, porcelains, and tea. Dutch traders sought to cater to an ever-expanding demand for spices that put them into direct competition with the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, especially after Jacob van Neck's 1599 voyage to Indonesia netted a haul of 425 tons of pepper, mace, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg.
- The Dutch government sponsored the establishment of the Dutch East India Company in 1602, uniting six preexisting companies in Amsterdam and other cities. The charter granted the company a 21-year monopoly on the spice trade and stipulated that company capital should be invested for 10-year periods rather than for individual voyages.
- The charter, granted by the Estates General, also gave the Dutch East India Company the ability to make war and peace in the name of its home government. It enjoyed fantastic success, with a massive merchant fleet employing 48,000 soldiers and an aggressive commitment to edging out its Iberian rivals.

- The Dutch established trading posts in Malacca, Ceylon, and the Cape of Good Hope, negotiating with indigenous peoples to oust their European predecessors or wresting trading concessions in return for the many European goods that passed through Dutch ports. The Dutch East India Company also sought a northwest passage through the Americas, but absent its existence, settled for claims along the east coast and in Canada.
- The desire for greater intrusion into the Atlantic trade prompted the establishment of the West India Company, in 1621. That company was granted a monopoly on the slave trade and sought to establish a more substantial Dutch presence through settlement in North America, in the Caribbean, and in South America.

England

- England was a bit slow off the blocks in the Age of Discovery. It wasn't until Elizabeth's reign that the English began to get more serious about overseas territory, and that attitude developed against the backdrop of an intensifying rivalry with Spain. The desire to counter Spanish control and Spanish riches led to privateering, including the activities of Sir Francis Drake.
- An early attempt at colonization in the New World founded by Sir Walter Raleigh at Roanoke failed, in part the victim of that Spanish rivalry. The Spanish Armada crisis prevented the English from sending supplies to the small group of colonists in 1587–1588. When they did get through in 1590, there was no sign of the colonists. Jamestown, established in 1607, was more successful.
- The English began to deepen efforts at development, both east and west. Government-licensed monopolies and chartered trading companies supported these initiatives, driven by political, economic, and religious motives. Increasingly repressive religious policies, for example, led to the flight of nonconformist Puritans from England in the early 17th with a group of pilgrims sailing to Plymouth in 1620.

- The most famous of the trading companies would target a location halfway across the world from Northern America: the East India Company. It was chartered by Elizabeth at the turn of the century. After a bumpy start—eviction from Sumatra and Java by the Dutch—they turned to India and found success. The rewards of such overseas ventures were substantial: In 1607, the East India Company earned 500 percent on its investment.

France

- In France, political and economic developments set the stage for a brand of royal authority known as absolutism. By the end of this course's time range, King Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715) would ascend to the throne to become the epitome of absolutist monarchs.
- Sixteenth- and 17th-century political theorists and practitioners who revised the playbook of royal power had established the roots of absolutism. When the first Bourbon king, Henry IV (r. 1589–1610), took the throne at the end of the French Wars of Religion, his country was devastated. A collapse in trade and crushingly high taxes resulted in severe economic contraction.
- Henry and his ministers addressed the problem with three crucial adjustments: Taxes on the peasants were lowered; the payment of an annual fee allowed royal officials to secure hereditary rights to their office; and the collection of taxes on salt sales and transport was contracted out to increase efficiency.
- New financial mechanisms that enhanced royal finances continued to be introduced after Henry's assassination in 1610. The rise of Armand Jean du Plessis, or Cardinal Richelieu, as chief minister would further set the stage for a new level of royal authority.
- Religion was a tool in Richelieu's arsenal. He assisted Louis XIII's program to tighten restrictions on Protestants within France, culminating with the fall of La Rochelle, a major port city with Huguenot privileges, in 1628.

- However, Richelieu embraced a streak of religious pragmatism in terms of foreign policy. He assisted the cause of international Protestantism during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) in a bid to safeguard France against its Catholic Habsburg neighbors, both east and west.
- Key to enhancing royal authority and underwriting these domestic and foreign policies was financial stability. Richelieu worked to eliminate the threat the hereditary nobles posed to royal power by relying on royal commissioners to perform vital financial, political, and judicial service on behalf of the crown.

Civil Unrest

- Resistance to the centralizing efforts of Richelieu and his successor Cardinal Mazarin (1602–1661) erupted in a rebellion known as the Fronde during the minority of Louis XIV. The Fronde (1648–1653) was initiated by magistrates' objections to plans to do away with judicial salaries and then fueled by discontented nobles, angered by the erosion of their traditional privileges.
- Louis XIV's assumption of power in his own right in 1651 quelled the disturbances, but its legacies were significant. The objections to royal power that the Fronde represented were essentially defused by a compromise settlement. Having had to flee the capital at the height of the disturbance, the king was determined never to allow rebellion to insult his royal dignity again.
- In the quest for enhanced power, the king's finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, argued for the development of governmental policies that would regulate the French economy for the good of the state—that is, mercantilism. Colbert coached the king to embrace a plan of commercial and maritime expansion, to the benefit of the state and its people.
- Colbert called for an expansion of French control in North America and an enhanced presence in the east, founding the French East India Company in 1664. A new race was on.

Suggested Reading

Bowen, Lincoln, and Rigby, eds., *The Worlds of the East India Company*.

Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire*.

Questions to Consider

- 1 What factors led to the Dutch getting a head start on France and Britain in terms of exploration?
- 2 What differing factors led to the Dutch Republic, France, and Britain launching their exploratory and expansionist efforts?

LECTURE 48

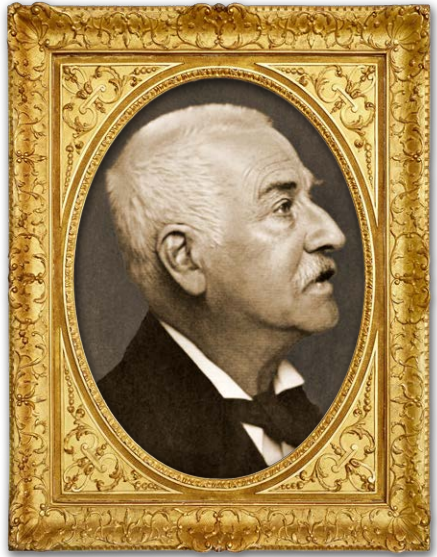
Renaissance Legacy: Burckhardt and Beyond



his lecture begins with a look at the writer Jacob Burckhardt, who penned perhaps the most enduring vision of the Renaissance. Then, the lecture takes a look back at the themes, ideas, and events discussed throughout the course.

Jacob Burckhardt

- Jacob Burckhardt was born in 1818, the son of a Protestant minister from the Swiss city of Basel. As a young man, Burckhardt was himself earmarked for a religious vocation. However, he experienced a crisis of faith, and turned away from his intended career path to take up the study of history.
- He traveled to Berlin, then an intellectual hotbed for the subject. Burckhardt studied with acclaimed German historian Leopold von Ranke, who's often regarded as the father of history as a modern academic discipline.



🌀 Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897) 🌀

- After several trips to Italy, Burckhardt produced *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* in 1860 (first translated into English in 1878). It was a sweeping and elegant treatment of various dynamics of the Italian Renaissance, enriched by Burckhardt's study of art.
- Burckhardt advanced a number of themes in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. He underscored the idea of the Renaissance as a distinct period in history markedly different from its medieval predecessor and characterized in the Italian states by the emergence of the individual and the first glimpses of modernity. Because it was the unique conditions in Italy that allowed the “veil to melt,” the Italian was, according to Burckhardt “the firstborn among the sons of modern Europe.”

- Some scholars have criticized Burckhardt for, among other things, taking the Renaissance too much at its own word. If the Italian Renaissance writers were selling, it seems they had an eager buyer in Burckhardt. However, despite the challenges and criticism from “competent judges” he feels sure to come, Burckhardt embraces the value of persistence, saying, “Such indeed is the importance of the subject that it still calls for fresh investigation, and may be studied with advantage from the most varied points of view.”

A Look Back

- At the start of the Renaissance, scholasticism was rejected in favor of humanism, the application of logic to theology supplanted by a new emphasis on learning devoted to an understanding of the human experience. That understanding, the humanists thought, was best achieved by knowing the ancient world, in and on its own terms.
- Humanism was just one of a number of paths to knowledge during the transformation of the West. Schools of navigation, medicine, and business were also needed to propel Europe into its new age. Education was expansive and practical. It was a personal and societal commodity that helped underwrite and sustain European growth during its period of transformation from medieval to early modern.
- During the Renaissance centuries, God-centered education still mattered. The quest for a more perfect understanding of faith and the components of Christian living continued to inform educational initiatives, particularly in the wake of the Reformation’s challenge to the old faith.
- New print technology dramatically increased the stability of texts, and the burgeoning print industry provided an ever-expanding audience with greater access to learning. Print also played a role in the promotion of vernacular language.

The People of the Renaissance

- Wealth, gender, occupation, and marital status all mattered in shaping Renaissance peoples' experiences and opportunities. Even in the city-states of Renaissance Italy, with their cherished notions of citizenship, and even in the emerging constitutional governments in northwest Europe, no real sense of equality among peoples existed.
- Renaissance people were different from one another, rather than a homogenous glitterati drifting through the breathtaking works of art synonymous with the term Renaissance. People were separated by their condition, from princes to paupers, in a great human chain of being that sought to order and organize human society.
- That concept of how to function as a collective within the Renaissance state was also subject to considerable scrutiny as people grappled with the question of what made good government. Italian civic humanists championed republicanism, but republican experiments failed. The challenges of foreign invasion and ambitious men undermined most of the republics.

Laws and Violence

- The Renaissance was an age of magistrates and monarchs, for whom both style and substance mattered. Laws and regulations proliferated to ensure good order. Rulers demanded religious uniformity, which they believed was required for civil stability, and they punished disobedience.
- The cracking of the Christian consensus represented by the European Reformation led to the spilling of Christian blood. While the search for new paths to God and to salvation resulted in new formulations of what it meant to be a good Christian, the notion that multiple understandings of faith could peacefully coexist wasn't a product of the age.
- Even as religious imperatives drove authorities to sanction violence in the attempt to crush dissension, they would also, during the Reformation, lead to the articulation of innovative theories of resistance. Unjust rulers, who in these new formulations included those who persecuted the faithful, were not protected by divine sanction.

The Reach of the Renaissance

- Many scholars and texts identify the Renaissance as a period of rebirth that was stymied by early 16th-century developments, the Reformation and its consequences most notable among them. However, this course has taken the Renaissance up to the dawn of the Enlightenment and the age of absolutism.
- Broadly speaking, Enlightenment thinkers were knowledge seekers, much like the Renaissance people. However, Enlightenment paths to knowledge were markedly different from those pursued by Renaissance intellectuals.
- Renaissance involved seeking, augmenting, and then surpassing the guidance of the classical authorities. Enlightenment philosophes were suspicious of the received vision of knowledge, rejecting the values of the past they saw as leading to excess and fanaticism. They ushered in a new emphasis on reason.
- The Renaissance question of good government, too, was turned on its head as our course comes to a close. The noble scholar and warrior ideal of a prince was replaced with another model of authority. The embracing of absolute monarchy as well as its contestation in places like Britain, where a new relationship between authority and people followed regicide and restoration, required the articulation of new ideas about power.
- Some justified the exercise of absolute control, while others defined government as a compact between ruler and ruled. The consequences of these new ideas and practices would propel the West into a new stage of its development, coming ever closer in its sensibilities and structures to identifiably modern patterns.

The Legacy of the Renaissance

- The Renaissance left as its most powerful and enduring legacy the idea that being human was a most worthy condition, and that humans are capable of tremendous achievement, stretching toward perfection. Such notions were initially the preserve of a handful of humanists hailing from the Italian states and then, slightly later, from the states beyond the Alps.

- The quest for the good life was taken up by others, people whose worldviews expanded through a reconsideration of the nature of God, the path to salvation, and the best way to live a Christian life. New identities were forged by changing economic, cultural, social, and political realities, and by contact with new cultures.
- Questions about the human experience kept coming, supplemented by technological advancements—print and navigational innovations among them—that transported ideas and people across the spaces of pages and oceans. The Renaissance legacy was exported and codified. It survives as an enduring vision for the modern world because it is so compelling.

Suggested Reading

Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.
Woolfson, ed., *Renaissance Historiography*.

Bibliography

Albala, Ken. *Food in Early Modern Europe*. Westport, CN: Greenwood, 2003. A nimble survey of the history of food from 1500 to 1800 that connects food and its consumption to its economic and cultural contexts.

Altmann, Barbara K., and Deborah L. McGrady, ed. *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*. New York: Routledge, 2003. A collection of essays outlining new directions in the work of the 14th-century author with emphasis on her late medieval contexts, her commentary on women, and her writings.

Anderson, Michael. *Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500–1914*. New Studies in Economic and Social History. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. A brief but broad treatment of the subject, emphasizing themes and methods (“the demographic approach,” “the sentiments approach,” and the “household economics approach”) used in the study of the family.

Atlas, Allan W. *Renaissance Music: Music in Western Europe, 1400–1600*. Norton Introduction to Music History. New York: Norton, 1998. Designed as an undergraduate introduction to its subject; provides a useful treatment of Renaissance music and its integration into other aspects of the stipulated period.

Azzolini, Monica, and Isabella Lazzarini, ed. *Italian Renaissance Diplomacy: A Sourcebook*. Durham Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Translations 6. Toronto: PIMS, 2017. A collection of diplomatic primary sources, many of which were previously unavailable in English, which sheds new light on the study of diplomacy as well as demonstrates the utility of the texts in examining other aspects of Renaissance life.

Bartlett, Kenneth R., ed. *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance: A Sourcebook*. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2011. Primary sources from some of the leading voices of the Italian Renaissance on the topics of politics, art, learning, and faith as well as documents on poverty, work, and the family.

Bartlett, Kenneth R., and Margaret McGlynn, ed. *The Renaissance and Reformation in Northern Europe*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2014. Documentary collection covering, among its many subjects, humanism in northern Europe, the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, and the European discoveries at home and abroad.

Bashera, Luca, Bruce Gordon, and Christian Moser, eds. *Following Zwingli: Applying the Past in Reformation Zurich*. St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History. London: Routledge, 2014. A series of case studies exploring the legacy of Zwingli's reform movement in the decades after his death, particularly considering the tensions involved in the interplay of past ideals and present realities.

Benedict, Philip. *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2004. A broad, comprehensive study of the origins of Calvinism, its spread, and its impact.

Bethencourt, Francisco. *The Inquisition: A Global History, 1478–1834*. Translated by Jean Birrell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Coverage of the institutions and personnel of the Inquisition designed as a reconsideration of the subject through its comparative, rather than regional or national, emphasis.

Biow, Douglas. *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries: Humanism and Professions in Renaissance Italy*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002. A consideration of case studies of a trio of professions that demonstrates the interaction of humanism and professionalism and suggests humanism provided shared understandings and approaches.

Black, Jeremy. *Beyond the Military Revolution: War in the Seventeenth-Century World*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2011. Contextualizes the military revolution (typically regarded as a European phenomenon) in its global setting while looking beyond the traditional boundaries of military history to situate developments within 17th-century cultures, politics, and societies.

Black, Robert. *Education and Society in Florentine Tuscany: Teachers, Pupils and Schools, c. 1250–1500*. Leiden: Brill, 2007. An extensive regional study of pre-university education based on archival material with special consideration of Florence; includes numerous and valuable documentary appendices.

Borchert, Till-Holger. *Van Eyck to Dürer: The Influence of Early Netherlandish Painting on European Art, 1430–1530*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2011. Produced as an accompaniment to an exhibition in Bruges, this richly illustrated volume traces the artistic interactions between noted Netherlandish masters and artists working throughout central Europe.

Bowen, H. V., Margarette Lincoln, and Nigel Rigby, eds. *The Worlds of the East India Company*. Rochester: Boydell, 2002. Fourteen essays first presented at a conference at the National Maritime Museum in London to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the founding of the English East India Company.

Boxer, C. R. *The Dutch Seaborne Empire: 1600–1800*. Rev. ed. London: Penguin, 1990. Still an engaging read describing the rise and fall of the Dutch seaborne empire.

———. *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*. New York: Knopf, 1969. A survey of Europe's first maritime empire.

Brotton, Jerry. *The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. An overview of the major ideas and processes associated with the Renaissance, 1400–1600.

———. *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. A consideration of the cross-cultural contacts that helped define the Renaissance in Europe and helped make the Renaissance a global phenomenon.

Brown, Alison. *The Medici in Florence: The Exercise and Language of Power*. Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1992. A collection of 12 essays on 15th-century Florence and the Medici that trace the impact of alterations in the forms and functions of Florentine political life.

Brown, Patricia Fortini. *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice: Art, Architecture, and the Family*. Yale University Press, 2004. Comprehensively illustrated study by an art historian of the domestic spaces of Venetian patricians and the interplay between public and private in Venetian households.

Brucker, Gene. *Renaissance Florence*. Rev. ed. Berkeley: University of California, 1983. Classic study of Florence covering the period between 1380 and 1450, emphasizing the city's physical description, economy, politics, and culture.

Bruening, Michael W., ed. *Reformation Sourcebook: Documents from an Age of Debate*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2017. Excerpts from documents covering the late medieval church, the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, religious wars, and the cultural impact of religious upheaval and new theologies.

Brundin, Abigail, and Matthew Treherne, ed. *Forms of Faith in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Culture and Religion*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2009. A collection of essays designed to explore the expression of religious sentiment and devotion in art, music, and literature in the early modern world.

Buchard, Johann. *At the Court of the Borgia: Being an Account of the Reign of Pope Alexander VI Written by His Master of Ceremonies*. Edited and translated by Geoffrey Parker. London: Folio Society, 1963. A scintillating account of the papal court of Rodrigo Borgia by an eyewitness.

Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. 1860. Reissue ed. Introduction by Peter Burke. London: Penguin Classics, 1990. Masterful traditional account of the Italian Renaissance, identifying themes of Renaissance that shaped scholarly discourse for decades as subsequent scholars have contested and revised Burckhardt's vision of Renaissance.

Cameron, Euan. *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250–1750*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. A useful overview of the intersection of superstition, faith, and institutional religion from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment that includes a section on Renaissance and Reformation and considers the interactions between elite and popular culture.

Cavallo, Sandra, and Silvia Evangelisti, ed. *A Cultural History of Childhood and Family in the Early Modern Age*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012. A volume in the Cultural Histories Series, this installment on domestic life during the early modern period contains 10 chapters on diverse topics, from family relationships and geography to education, faith, and health.

Chambers, David, and Brian Pullan, eds. *Venice: A Documentary History 1450–1630*. Renaissance Society of America Reprint Texts 12. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. Excellent and diverse collection of primary source documents written by Venetians as well as visitors and rivals.

Cockram, Sarah D. P. *Isabella d'Este and Francesco Gonzaga: Power Sharing at the Italian Renaissance Court*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2013. Brisk and fascinating treatment of a Renaissance power couple using a wealth of archival material and making particularly robust use of the pair's correspondence, with extracts of letters included in the appendix.

Collins, Amanda. *Greater Than Emperor: Cola di Rienzo (ca. 1313–54) and the World of Fourteenth-Century Rome*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002. A nuanced presentation of Cola di Rienzo's seizure of power in 1347, with special emphasis on the social and municipal dynamics that served as context for the drive for civic autonomy in Rome.

Colonna, Vittoria. *Sonnets for Michelangelo: A Bilingual Edition*. Translated by Abigail Brundin. The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005. Published as part of Chicago's valuable series exploring women's lives and writings, this volume includes poems Colonna collected for Michelangelo as a gift, annotated and presented in both Italian and English.

Cressy, David, and Lori Anne Ferrell, eds. *Religion and Society in Early Modern England: A Sourcebook*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2005. Collection of documents and extracts from the Tudor and Stuart periods touching many aspects of religion during the English Reformation and the 17th-century upheavals as well as their political and social contexts and impacts.

Crosby, Alfred W., Jr. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. New ed. London: Praeger, 2003. Thirtieth-anniversary edition of Crosby's influential introduction of the Columbian Exchange between Europe and the New World; includes an essay by J. R. McNeill that analyzes the way the original publication changed scholarly approaches to ecological and social events and processes.

Crum, Roger J., and John T. Paoletti, eds. *Renaissance Florence: A Social History*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006. A collection of nearly two dozen essays by leading specialists on an array of topics concerning everyday life, including uses of religious and civic space, workplaces, and gender.

Dandele, Thomas James. *Spanish Rome, 1500–1700*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. A treatment of the politics, people, and piety of Rome from the perspective of the Spanish imperial domination.

Datini's Archive, Fondazione Istituto Internazionale Di Storia Economica "F. Datini," http://www.istitutodatini.it/schede/archivio/home_e.htm. Online resource presenting a collection of the correspondence and accounts of the famous merchant of Prato, Francesco Datini (1335–1410). Available in English.

Dear, Peter. *Revolutionizing the Sciences: European Knowledge and Its Ambitions, 1500–1700*. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. A lucid and useful introduction to the origins of modern science through a consideration of familiar figures of the Scientific Revolution.

Disney, A. R. *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Comprehensive and impressive, this two-volume set traces the development of Portugal and its empire to the start of the 19th century.

Duffy, Eamon. *Reformation Divided: Catholics, Protestants and the Conversion of England*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

———. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. A sweeping study of religious culture in England before and after the initiation of the Reformation that challenges older interpretations of Reformation as popular and desired by the English people.

Dunlop, Anne. *Painted Palaces: The Rise of Secular Art in Early Renaissance Italy*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2009. Sumptuously illustrated with hundreds of images, this book studies the decoration of Italian palaces and homes during the early Renaissance.

Dunthorne, Hugh. *Britain and the Dutch Revolt, 1560–1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. An interesting account of British attitudes about the rebellion of their neighbors based on contemporary pamphlet literature that also draws connections to Britain's own civil upheaval in the seventeenth century.

Eire, Carlos M. N. *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. A comprehensive and informative consideration of the European Reformations from a leading scholar that considers a variety of Renaissance and Reformation processes and contexts.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. An updated edition of the now-classic study of the impact of print on early modern culture.

Elwood, Christopher. *The Body Broken: The Calvinist Doctrine of the Eucharist and the Symbolization of Power in Sixteenth-Century France*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. An exploration of

the connection between French Calvinist understandings of the Eucharist and the development of new ideas about power as well as the relationship between the sacred and political authority.

Epstein, Stephan R., ed. *Town and Country in Europe, 1300–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. A collection of a dozen essays by specialists of various geographic territories that surveys relations between town and country across Europe from the later Middle Ages to the Enlightenment.

Ertman, Thomas. *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Thoughtful consideration of early modern state-building that identifies geo-military competition and the exercise of local government as key factors in explaining the diversity in development across the European states.

Fernandez-Armesto, Felipe. *The Spanish Armada: The Experience of War in 1588*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. One of a number of accounts published for the 400th anniversary of the Spanish Armada, this text problematizes the notion of Spanish failure during the summer of 1588 and reconsiders the goals and activities of the armada.

Fletcher, Catherine. *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. A concise history of the rise of resident diplomacy in Rome combined with an exploration of personnel, information, communication, and gift giving by a leading voice in the new diplomatic history.

Fortune, Jane, with Linda Falcone. *Invisible Women: Forgotten Artists of Florence*. 3rd ed. Florence: Florentine Press, 2014. The book that inspired the PBS documentary series *Invisible Women*, this text examines the works of women artists in Renaissance Florence.

Friedeburg, Robert von. *Luther's Legacy: The Thirty Years War and the Modern Notion of "State" in the Empire, 1530s to 1790s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. An assessment of the German concept of the state as it developed from the protests of the princes in the 1530 through the Thirty Years' War and beyond.

Frisch, Andrea. *Forgetting Differences: Tragedy, Historiography, and the French Wars of Religion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015. A study of representations of French religious violence in history and tragedy from 1550 to 1630 examining the evolving relationship between emotion and politics against the backdrop of the emergence of absolutism.

Fumerton, Patricia. *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Insightful consideration of early modern poverty, vagrancy, and dispossessed peoples on land and sea drawing on contemporary pamphlets and literary representations.

Goertz, Hans-Jürgen. *The Anabaptists*. Translated by Trevor Johnson. Christianity and Society in the Modern World. London: Routledge, 1996. A treatment of Anabaptists' beliefs as well as social and political contexts in German lands and beyond.

Goldthwaite, Richard A. *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300–1600*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1993. Seminal text articulating what has become known as the Goldthwaite Thesis, emphasizing the importance of material culture and identifying the roots of modern consumer society in Renaissance Italy.

Gordon, Bruce. *Calvin*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. An essential biography of the French reformer by an accomplished scholar.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Will in the World: How Shakespeare became Shakespeare*. New York: Norton, 2004. A Pulitzer Prize finalist, this book by a leading scholar offers an absorbing treatment of the world of young William Shakespeare.

Haigh, Christopher. *The Plain Man's Pathways to Heaven: Kinds of Christianity in Post-Reformation England, 1570–1640*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. A carefully researched text by a major contributor to the study of the English Reformation exploring varieties of belief in later 16th- and early 17th-century England.

Hailwood, Mark. *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2014. A lively and informative account of the English alehouse between 1550 and 1700 that allows for consideration of how early modern men and women responded to the major events and processes of a dynamic period of English history.

Hall, Marcia B., and Tracy Elizabeth Cooper, ed. *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. A well-illustrated collection of 13 essays, many by leading art historians of the period, exploring the Catholic Church's promotion of the use of the senses in the experience of faith.

Hanke, Lewis. *All Mankind is One: A Study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda on the Religious and Intellectual Capacity of the American Indians*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974. A documentary-driven account of the great mid-16th-century debate over Spanish colonial policies and activities in the Americas.

Haribson, Craig. *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in Its History Context*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995. Classic account of Northern Renaissance art, beautifully illustrated and interpreted.

Heal, Felicity. *The Power of Gifts: Gift Exchange in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. A scrupulously researched treatment of continuities and changes in gift-giving customs during the Tudor and Stuart centuries, with coverage of diplomatic giving, New Year's giving, and the emergence of a new discourse about gifts and corruption late in the Stuart period.

Herlihy, David, and Christane Klapisch-Zuber. *Tuscans and Their Families: A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427*. New Haven: Yale, 1985. Fascinating presentation of the wealth of information on Tuscan families produced by the documentary records of the tax survey of 1427, which also has a digital resource hosted by Brown University.

Holt, Mack P. *The French Wars of Religion, 1562–1629*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Concise, essential study of religious conflict in France, presented chronologically and supplemented with genealogical charts and brief biographies.

Hornbeck, II, J. Patrick, and Michael Van Dussen, ed. *Europe after Wyclif*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017. A collection of 12 essays on the legacy of Wyclif throughout Europe, with topics that include the emergence of the Hussite heresy and vernacular scripture.

Houston, R. A. *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Its Growth, Uses, and Impact, 1500–1800*. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 2002. An expanded second edition, this book extends its geographic and topical coverage in its examination of the processes through which mass literacy emerged.

Howard, Peter. *Creating Magnificence in Renaissance Florence*. Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies *Essays & Studies* 29 (2010). A revisionist treatment of the Florentine public discourse on magnificence that situates its emergence within a religious rather than secular context and in the 1420s rather than the mid-15th century.

Howell, Martha C. *Commerce before Capitalism in Europe, 1300–1600*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Careful and important reassessment of the relationship between the later medieval commercial revolution and the emergence of capitalism that examines the interplay between sociocultural practices and economic culture.

Hsia, R. Po-chia. *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. A synthesis of scholarship on the history of Catholicism and Catholic culture from the Council of Trent through the late 18th century.

IDEA Isabella d'Este Archive. <http://isabelladeste.ucsc.edu>. A digital resource for exploring the history and culture of early modern Italy, presenting the letters, music, and art collections of Isabella d'Este (1474–1539), marchesa of Mantua, as well as other materials. Requires registration for access to portions of the site.

Isaacson, Walter. *Leonardo da Vinci*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017. Lively, lucid, and accessible account of Leonardo's life and work. The bestselling text is lavishly prepared, illustrated with images from Leonardo's many notebooks.

Jacob, Frank, and Gilmar Visoni-Alonzo. *The Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe: A Revision*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Analysis of early modern warfare that challenges the notion of a European military "revolution."

Jardine, Lisa. *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1998. Notable and compelling study examining the influence of wealth and consumerism on the development of the culture of the Renaissance.

Johnson, Geraldine A. *Renaissance Art: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. A concise but wide-ranging treatment of Renaissance art.

Kaborycha, Lisa, ed. *A Corresponding Renaissance: Letters Written by Italian Women, 1375–1650*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. An excellent collection of 55 annotated primary source letters written by women, introduced with a thoughtful and accessible essay.

Kagan, Richard L., and Abigail Dyer, ed. *Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews & Other Heretics*. 2nd ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2011.

Kallendorf, Craig W., trans. *Humanist Educational Treatises*. Cambridge: Harvard University, 2008.

Kaplan, Benjamin J. *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Karant-Nunn, Susan, and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, ed. *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. A valuable collection of the reformer's comments on women assembled by two leading authorities.

Kelly, Joan. "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" In *Women, History & Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984. A seminal essay considering gendered aspects of the Renaissance to conclude that women did not have a Renaissance.

Key, Newton, and Robert Bucholz, eds. *Sources and Debates in English History, 1485–1714*. 2nd ed. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. An extensive collection of primary source materials from the Tudor and Stuart centuries organized around key early modern themes and designed to accompany a narrative textbook by the two scholars.

King, Margaret L. *A Short History of the Renaissance in Europe*. 3rd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2017. Revised and updated, an engagingly introduction to the European Renaissance, emphasizing the Italian Peninsula but with coverage of the Northern Renaissance, Reformation, and other Renaissance-related topics.

———. *Women of the Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991. Excellent and informative consideration of the lived experiences of women from a variety of backgrounds and material conditions during the European Renaissance.

King, Margaret L., and Albert Rabil, Jr. *Her Immaculate Hand: Selected Works By and About the Women Humanists of Quattrocento Italy*. Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1983.

King, Ross. *Brunelleschi's Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture*. New York: Penguin, 2001. Bestselling account of Filippo Brunelleschi's creation of the famed dome of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence.

———. *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*. Reissue ed. London: Penguin, 2003. Popular and lively account of Michelangelo's work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling under the patronage of Pope Julius II.

Kirkpatrick, Robin. *The European Renaissance, 1400–1600*. Arts, Culture, and Society in the Western World. Harlow, UK: Longman, 2001. A generously illustrated cultural study of the Renaissance as a European process that focuses on the arts.

Kishlansky, Mark. *Charles I: An Abbreviated Life*. Penguin Monarchs. London: Allen Lane, 2014. A brisk and accessible account of the personality and decisions of the Stuart monarch within his historical context.

Klapisch-Zuber, Christiane. *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. A compelling account of women's lives in Renaissance Italy, with particular focus on Tuscany and coverage of topics including wet nursing, childbirth, matrimonial culture, and widowhood.

Kohl, Benjamin G. *Padua under the Carrara, 1318–1405*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1998. Comprehensive and well-documented treatment of the Carrara lords of Padua that allows for a consideration of many aspects and areas of Italian history during the later medieval period.

Kuhn, Thomas S., and Ian Hacking. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: 50th Anniversary Edition*. 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012. Watershed treatment of scientific change that popularized the notion of a “paradigm shift,” presented with updated and expanded coverage and a new introductory essay that considers the impact of Kuhn's major assertions.

Lane, Frederic C. *Venice: A Maritime Republic*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1973. Classic account of Venetian history from its 6th-century origins through its emergence as an empire and its decline.

Laughton, John Knox, ed. *State Papers Relating to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*. 2 vols. London: Navy Records Society, 1894. Indispensable collection of documentary evidence for the Armada contained in the official Tudor government records.

Law, John E., and Bernadette Paton, ed. *Communes and Despots in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. A wide-ranging collection of essays written to explore further the connections identified by scholar Philip Jones between the communes and the despotisms of late medieval and early Renaissance Italy. Among the many topics of consideration is the blurry line between the theories and practices of liberty and despotism.

Levathes, Louise. *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405–1433*. Rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. A briskly written treatment of the causes and consequences of the early Ming voyages of exploration under the sponsorship of the Yongle emperor and the leadership of Muslim eunuch admiral Zheng He.

MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490–1700*. New York: Viking, 2004. Masterful and comprehensive work by an acclaimed scholar.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince with Related Documents*. Edited by William J. Connell. Bedford Series of History and Culture. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016. A useful introductory essay traces the place of *The Prince* in history. Machiavelli's famous text is accompanied by a series of contemporary documents as well as excerpts from authors as diverse as Christopher Marlowe, Frederick the Great of Prussia, and Benito Mussolini to demonstrate the work's impact.

Major, J. Russell. *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy: French Kings, Nobles & Estates*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1994. A consideration of the French monarchy from Francis I to Louis XIV that offers a critical reassessment of the timeline of absolutism and the role of the nobility in its articulation and operation.

Malleus Maleficarum. Translated by P. G. Maxwell-Stuart. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007. An updated translation of the famous 15th-century witch-finding manual accompanied by a critical introductory essay.

Marsh, Christopher. *Music and Society in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. An excellent, thoroughly researched overview of early modern English secular and sacred music with an accompanying compact disc.

Marshall, Peter. *The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. A survey of the European Reformations by a noted scholar that considers the origins as well as the complex consequences of Europe's reform movements of the 16th century.

Martin, Colin, and Geoffrey Parker. *The Spanish Armada*. New York: Norton, 1988. A revisionist account published that examines and critiques a number of enduring myths of the armada, drawing on new scholarship and new findings from underwater archaeological work.

Martines, Lauro. *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for Renaissance Florence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. A highly readable and nuanced treatment of the life, death, and legacy of fiery preacher Girolamo Savonarola.

———. *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1998. A treatment of the economic, political, cultural, and social conditions for the development of the Italian city-states in two broad stages, from the 11th century to 1300 and from 1300 to the late 16th century.

Mattingly, Garrett. *The Armada*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959. Pulitzer Prize-winning account of the Spanish Armada.

———. *Renaissance Diplomacy*. London: Cape, 1955. The classic account of the development of Italian Renaissance diplomacy.

Mayer, Thomas F. *The Roman Inquisition: A Papal Bureaucracy and Its Laws in the Age of Galileo*. Philadelphia: University of Penn Press, 2013.

Mayer, Thomas F., and D. R. Woolf, eds. *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe: Forms of Biography from Cassandra Fedele to Louis XIV*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1995. Collection of essays from scholars in the fields of history, art history, and literature that considers constructed life histories in a variety of genres.

Merrick, Jeffrey, and Bryant T. Ragan Jr., ed. *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. A valuable source collection dominated by documents from the 17th and 18th centuries organized under a range of headings within broad categories, including "Traditions," "Repression," and "Representation."

More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Edited by David Harris Sacks. Bedford Series in History and Culture. Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999. A lively edition of More's classic account with a fine introductory essay by the editor.

Morton, Peter A., ed. *The Trial of Tempel Anneke: Records of a Witchcraft Trial in Brunswick, Germany, 1663*. Translated by Barbara Dähms. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. A fascinating documentary account of a witchcraft trial that reveals long-simmering personal resentments and religious and economic anxieties.

Muir, Edward. *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Faction in Friuli during the Renaissance*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1993. A compulsively readable account of the Udine Carnival massacre of 1511.

Mulgan, Catherine. *The Renaissance Monarchies: 1469–1558*. Cambridge Perspectives in History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. A consideration of the Renaissance monarchies of Spain and France during the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles V, and Francis I.

Najemy, John M. *A History of Florence: 1200–1575*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006. An accomplished and detailed exploration of Florence's history and identity during key centuries of its development.

Nauert, Charles G., Jr. *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Textbook treatment of humanism's impact on Europe with a consideration of major themes and figures.

Nierop, Henk F. K. van. *Treason in the Northern Quarter: War, Terror, and the Rule of Law in the Dutch Revolt*. Translated by J. C. Grayson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. An account of the trial of a young Catholic lawyer accused of conspiring with Spanish invaders, used by the author as a lens through which to consider the impact of the Dutch Revolt on ordinary victims of the revolts' violence and loss.

Nogarola, Isotta. *Complete Writings: Letterbook, Dialogue on Adam and Eve, Orations*. Edited by Margaret L. King and Diana Rabin. The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Published as part of Chicago's valuable series exploring women's lives and writings, this critical edition of the works of Isotta Nogarola contains some key texts in the Renaissance debate on the capabilities of women.

Norwich, John Julius. *A History of Venice*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982. Standard account of the history of the Venetian republic.

O'Callaghan, Joseph F. *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2002. A valuable text that situates the processes of crusade in Iberia within broader Mediterranean initiatives and explores the dynamism of the papacy in sanctioning Iberian holy war.

Ogilvie, Sheilagh. *Institutions and European Trade: Merchant Guilds, 1000–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Important study of the long and complex history of European merchant guilds.

O'Malley, John W. *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000. A thoughtful treatment of the many faces of early modern Catholicism and the meaning of its varied identities both among contemporaries and among modern scholars.

O'Malley, Michelle. *Painting under Pressure: Fame, Reputation, and Demand in Renaissance Florence*. New Haven: Yale, 2014. Fascinating, well-researched consideration of art as business in Renaissance Florence.

O'Malley, Susan Gushee, ed. *Defences of Women: Jane Anger, Rachel Speght, Ester Sowernam, and Constantia Munda*. Vol. 4 of *Early Modern Englishwoman: Printed Writings, 1500–1640*. Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1996. Critical edition of four texts attributed to women during England's "Swetnam the Woman-Hater" print debate of the early 16th-century.

O'Meara, Dominic. *Monarchy and Consent: The Coronation Book of Charles V of France*. Studies in Medieval and Early Renaissance Art History. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001. A treatment of the religious and political significance of the French coronation ritual.

O'Reilly, Terence. *From Ignatius to John of the Cross: Spirituality and Literature in Sixteenth-Century Spain*. London: Routledge, 1995. A collection of essays dealing with the writings of religious movements including Illuminism, the Jesuits, and the reformed Carmelites.

Parker, Geoffrey. *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. A discussion of the “military revolution” as first introduced by Michael Roberts and augmented with diagrams and photographs to illustrate technological, architectural, and tactical developments.

Parker, Geoffrey, ed. *The Thirty Years’ War*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 1997. An accessible chronological account of the Thirty Years’ War with contributions from several leading scholars.

Parry, J. H. *The Spanish Seaborne Empire*. New York: Knopf, 1966. Compulsively readable classic by a noted scholar that traces the impact of Spain on the Americas.

Petrarch, Francesco. *The Secret with Related Documents*. Edited by Carol E. Quillen. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003. An accessible copy of Petrarch’s complex text with an introductory essay that explores the work’s significance and contexts.

Pettegree, Andrew. *The Book in the Renaissance*. Reprint ed. New Haven: Yale, 2010. An engaging cultural history of the complexities of print during the first century and a half after Gutenberg.

———. *Brand Luther: 1517, Printing, and the Making of the Reformation*. New York: Penguin, 2015. A critical assessment of the role of print in disseminating Luther’s ideas and in building Luther’s brand as a reformer and thinker. It underscores the active role Luther played in the look and style of his printed works.

———. *Europe in the Sixteenth Century*. Blackwell History of Europe. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002. Textbook coverage of the major events, figures, and themes of 16th-century Europe by a noted scholar.

Philippides, Marios, ed. and trans. *Mehmed II the Conqueror and the Fall of the Franco-Byzantine Levant to the Ottoman Turks: Some Western Views and Testimonies*. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007.

Prak, Maarten, ed. *Early Modern Capitalism: Economic and Social Change in Europe, 1400–1800*. London: Routledge, 2001. An overview of the diversity of practices of labor and capital in the period leading to the Industrial Revolution with chapters from noted experts.

Rabil, Albert, Jr., ed. *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms and Legacy*. Volume 1: *Humanism in Italy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1988. A dated but still valuable volume of essays that offers broad treatment of humanism and its impact.

Raleigh, Sir Walter. *The Discovery of Guiana with Related Documents*. Edited by Benjamin Schmidt. Bedford Series in History and Culture. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008. An authoritative edition of Raleigh's text.

Randolph, Adrian W. B. *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics, and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. New Haven: Yale, 2002. A study of the symbolism of Florentine art, particularly the sculpture of Donatello, that examines the gendered categorization of political and social relationships and the use of patronage to alleviate political tensions.

Ray, Meredith K. *Writing Gender in Women's Letter Collections of the Italian Renaissance*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2009. A presentation of collections of letters authored women writers from diverse backgrounds to demonstrate the participation of women in literary self-fashioning.

Rex, Richard. *The Lollards*. Social History in Perspective. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2002. A concise overview of England's homegrown heresy, which claims, in opposition to other treatments of the subject, that Lollardy played no role in the success of the 16th-century English Reformation.

Rogers, Clifford J., ed. *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*. History & Warfare. Boulder: Westview, 1995. Collection of essays that demonstrates the diversity of interpretations of the military revolution in European and beyond from the 13th to the 18th centuries.

Roper, Lyndal. *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany*. New Haven: Yale, 2004. A fascinating exploration of the history and subjectivity of witch hunting and confessions of witchcraft in southern Germany, based on archival accounts.

Rose, E. M. *The Murder of William of Norwich: The Origins of the Blood Libel in Medieval Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. An exploration of how the death of a young 12th-century English boy reportedly at the hands of Jews helped fuel rumors of ritual murder by the Jews throughout medieval Europe.

Rosenthal, Margaret F. *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992. The inspiration for the film *Dangerous Beauty* (1998), this interdisciplinary consideration of the life, contexts, and writings of one of the most famous women figures of the Italian Renaissance.

Roth, Norman. *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2002. An account of the history of the Jews in Spain, with detailed attention to the late medieval period and to the role of Conversos in various facets of Spanish life.

Rublak, Ulinka. *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. As the title suggests, an absorbing and illustrated treatment of personal adornment during the Renaissance and the intersection of dress and identity.

Ruff, Julius R. *Violence in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Synthesis of considerable scholarship on violence from the Reformation to the French Revolution, including chapters on states and armies, protest, ritual violence, interpersonal violence, and crime.

Russell, Peter. *Prince Henry the Navigator*. Nota Bene edition. New Haven: Yale, 2001. A readable account of the life and times of a key figure associated with the emergence of Europe's Age of Discovery, supplemented with a list of terms, genealogies, and other reader aids.

Ryrie, Alec, ed. *The European Reformations*. Palgrave Advances. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. A historiographical consideration of the European Reformations, Protestant and Catholic, with essays by 13 leading British, American, and Australian scholars.

Ryrie, Alec. *The Origins of the Scottish Reformation*. Politics, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006. A brisk and lively consideration of the period between 1525 and 1560 contesting the inevitability of Scottish Reformation and examining the potent interweaving of political and religious concerns that shaped reform in action.

Scribner, R. W., and C. Scott Dixon. *The German Reformation*. 2nd ed. Studies in European History. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2003. A revisiting of Scribner's classic study of the German Reformation, with a new introduction by Dixon, who also augmented the original book's bibliography and historiographical overview.

Seitz, Jonathan. *Witchcraft and Inquisition in Early Modern Venice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. An absorbing consideration of the intersection between nature and the supernatural in the worldview of early modern Venetians, based on records of trials of witchcraft before the Inquisition.

Shagan, Ethan H. *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*. Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Award-winning account of the early English Reformation during the reign of Henry VIII that examines the personal and the political factors driving change.

Simons, Patricia. *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. A sweeping examination of attitudes toward sex and gender leading up to the 17th century.

Skinner, Quentin. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. Volume 1: *The Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978. Influential introduction by a leading scholar to the emergence of modern political thought and the concept of the state through the use of familiar texts and authors as well as less well-known works. First of a two-volume set (the other is *The Age of Reformation*).

Stapleford, Richard, ed. and trans. *Lorenzo de' Medici at Home: The Inventory of the Palazzo Medici in 1492*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013. A thoughtful presentation of the inventory of the Palazzo Medici after the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent, prepared after his death, that allows modern readers to open the doors into the domestic space of one of the most familiar political figures of the Italian Renaissance.

Stayer, James M. *The German Peasants' War and the Anabaptist Community of Goods*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. A reconsideration of traditional interpretations of the Anabaptists, suggesting greater cohesion of their greater religious and social beliefs as oriented around the scripturally based practice of sharing goods communally.

Stinger, Charles L. *The Renaissance in Rome*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1998. A history of Rome and its Renaissance, emphasizing the dynamics of the city's image, its position as Christian capital, and its place in imperial history and concluding the impact of the Sack of Rome in 1527 and its aftermath.

't Hart, Marjolein. *The Dutch Wars of Independence: Warfare and Commerce in the Netherlands, 1570–1680*. London: Routledge, 2014. Excellent coverage of the Dutch revolt from a noted scholar that weaves together a strong narrative with a critical assessment of the intersections of war, economy, and society during the eight decades of conflict and their aftermath.

Trachtenberg, Marvin. *Dominion of the Eye: Urbanism, Art, and Power in Early Modern Florence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. An examination of the expansion of civic space and urban development in 14th-century Florence that reconsiders the timing of Renaissance urban planning and artistic achievements.

Tracy, James D. *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War: Campaign Strategy, International Finances, and Domestic Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. An assessment of Charles V's successes and limitations in a European context and through a consideration of the relationship between material resources and military imperatives.

Ulmann, Walter. *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002. A classic overview of the institution of the papacy from late antiquity through the Avignon Exile and Council of Constance.

Vasari, Giorgio. *The Lives of the Artists*. Translated by Juila Conway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. A modern translation of the famous collection of artist biographies prepared by Renaissance artist and promoter Giorgio Vasari.

Warner, Lyndan. *The Ideas of Man and Woman in Renaissance France: Print, Rhetoric, and Law*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011. An engaging and illuminating comparison of the print debates on women's nature with those on the dignity and misery of man in early modern France.

Wickersham, Jane K. *Rituals of Prosecution: The Roman Inquisition and the Prosecution of Philo-Protestants in Sixteenth-Century Italy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. A well-researched study drawing on inquisition manuals.

Wiesner-Hanks, Merry. *Early Modern Europe, 1450–1789*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. A thematic treatment of early modern Europe, broken into two periods, 1450 to 1600 and 1600 to 1789.

———. *The Renaissance and Reformation: A History in Documents*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. A mix of visual sources and documentary extracts.

Witt, Ronald G. *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni*. Leiden: Brill, 2000. An accomplished, authoritative, and award-winning study of the history and development of humanism.

Woodhead, Christine, and Metin Kunt, ed. *Suleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*. London: Longman, 1995. A collection of essays by leading scholars that provides a treatment of the reign of Suleyman (Suleiman) within its Ottoman and European contexts.

Woolfson, Jonathan, ed. *Renaissance Historiography*. Palgrave Advances. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. A useful starting point for a treatment of the subjects and debates informing the field of Renaissance studies by a number of leading scholars.

Wyatt, Michael. *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England: A Cultural Politics of Translation*. Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. A study of the immigrant Italian community in Tudor England.

Zmora, Hillary. *Monarchy, Aristocracy and the State in Europe, 1300–1800*. London: Routledge, 2001. This brief overview of state building across five centuries includes coverage of England, France, and Spanish and imperial lands.

Zophy, Jonathan. *A Short History of Renaissance and Reformation Europe: Dances over Fire and Water*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009. A concise and readable introduction to the period's major people, events, and processes.

Image Credits

5	Yale University Art Gallery
8	Wellcome Library, London/CC BY 4.0
10	Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
13	Dover Publications, Inc.
17	© Photos.com/Thinkstock
19	The Teaching Company Collection
29	Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
30	Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig/flickr/Public Domain
37	The Teaching Company Collection
45	The Teaching Company Collection
52	Lalupa/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0
54	Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève/Internet Archive/Public domain
57	Lalupa/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0
64	The Teaching Company Collection
69	Austrian National Library
70	Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
76	Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
82	Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
84	McPig/flickr/CC BY 2.0
90	Dover Publications, Inc.
97	©NickolayV/iStock/Thinkstock
102	Internet Archive
107	New York Public Library
115	The Teaching Company Collection
125	Metropolitan Museum of Art
136	Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
145	St. Genevieve Library Images/Internet Archive/Public domain
159	University of Toronto - Robarts Library/Internet Archive/Public Domain
162	The British Library
170	Wellcome Library, London
175	Getty's Open Content Program
176	Metropolitan Museum of Art
182	Austrian National Library
196	California Digital Library/Internet Archive/Public domain
198	New York Public Library

205	Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
207	New York Public Library
211	Metropolitan Museum of Art
225	The British Library/flickr/Public domain
230	Austrian National Library
235	Corel Stock Photo Library
236	©Photos.com/Thinkstock
258	©filipe_lopes/iStock/Thinkstock
274	Philadelphia Museum of Art
282	Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
288	©Photos.com/Thinkstock
302	Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
304	The British Library/flickr/public domain
321	Lokman/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain
326	©Dorling Kindersley/Thinkstock
331	The Teaching Company Collection
342	Internet Archive
frames	©ZaharovEvgeniy/iStock/Thinkstock
parchment	©forplayday/iStock/Thinkstock